Bro. Eddie's party needs Comelec approval—Abalos

Story on PAGE A2

It's blue Christmas for this Santa Claus

SORRY KIDS! HU-HU-HU!
PATI SI SANTA TAG-HIRAP?

By Tonette Orejas
PDI C. Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Don't look now, but Santa Claus may be having cash flow problems.

Former US baseman James Fetters,

IT'S BLUE/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- **Voters urged: Don't ask favors from politicians** ACROSS /A17

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'Like mountain thundering down'

Victims swept into the sea, recounts survivor

By Jani Arnaiz and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN RICARDO, Southern Leyte—Herman Gnayo was in a daze, but he could not hide the horror reflected in his eyes.

Gnayo, a fisherman who survived the landslides and tidal wave that practically wiped out his village of Pinut-an, walked for hours since early morning yesterday to the town proper here to get help. He reached the place at noon.

He was almost incoherent. He could not tell his age or what happened to his family. All he could say was that most of the people in his coastal community were missing.

The survivors back in Pinut-an, he said, were starving. There was no food. They only had their wet clothes on them.

Over 100 houses were first hit by a mudslide at around 4 p.m. Saturday and were swept into the sea by the swirling muddy water.

"*Kalit kaayo* (It happened too fast)," was all Gnayo could mutter over and over again.

He told Gov. Rosette Lerias that about half the people in his village were missing. Among them, he said, was the former mayor, Vicente Mejia, the husband of the current mayor, Virginia Mejia.

"We heard a thunderous sound and the next thing we knew we were covered in earth, rocks … It all happened so fast," said Gnayo in Cebuano.

He said the survivors were in desperate need of food and clothing.

Rick Laguras, 23, also of Pinut-an, was luckier. He said he was thrown into the sea after the mounds of mud hit his house and carried it to the sea.

Like Gnayo, he recalled first hearing a thundering noise. He said he looked up to see where it was coming from and saw the "mountain thundering down" directly into his house. The next thing he knew he was in the water.

He and his wife, Melva, were able to swim to safety, find an outrigger boat and row their way to the town proper's shore.

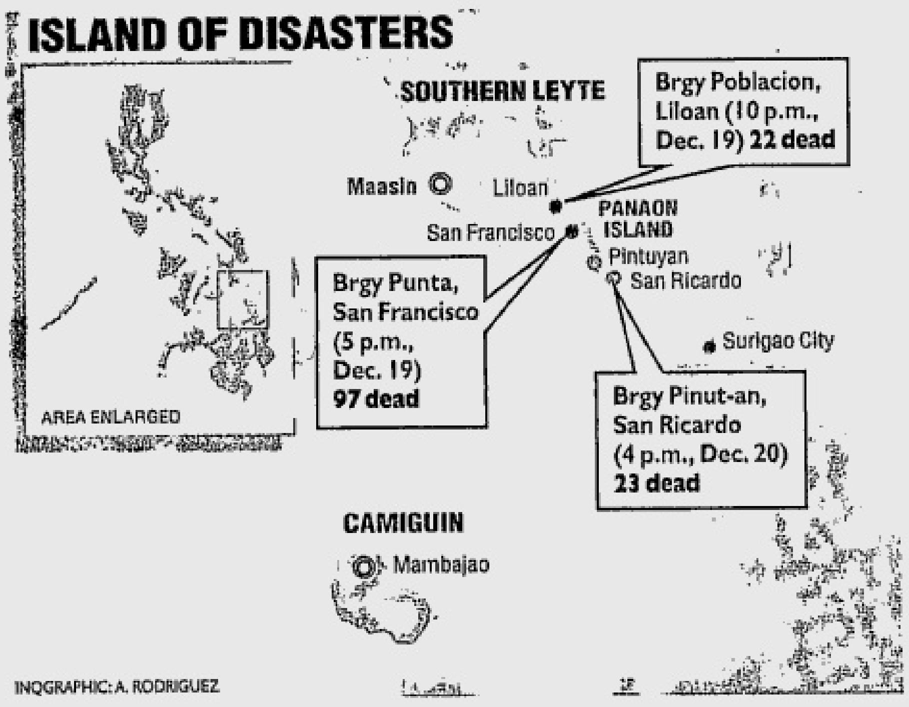
The couple did not know how they did

LIKE/ A21

WAILING relatives await the body of a loved one which was buried in a mudslide on Friday in Liloan, Southern Leyte. EDWIN BACASMAS

Slides hit 3rd Leyte town

ISLAND OF DISASTERS


SOUTHERN LEYTE
Brgy Poblacion, Liloan (10 p.m., Dec. 19) 22 dead
Maasin
Liloan
San Francisco
PANAON ISLAND
Pintuyan
San Ricardo
Brgy Punta, San Francisco (5 p.m., Dec. 19) 97 dead
Surigao City
Brgy Pinut-an, San Ricardo (4 p.m., Dec. 20) 23 dead
AREA ENLARGED
CAMIGUIN
Mambajao

INQGRAPHIC: A. RODRIGUEZ

Heavy rains, deforestation blamed for catastrophe

DAYS OF rain, severe deforestation and the mountainous terrain triggered the landslides that buried entire villages in Southern Leyte, an expert said.

More than a hundred people were dead or missing after tons of mud slammed into villages near the remote towns of Liloan, Maasin and San Francisco on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte, and in the northeastern part of Mindanao, rescuers said.

The mountainous area had been subjected to heavy deforestation which reduced the water-holding capacity of the land and made it sloppy, leading to mudslides, government weather forecaster Leny Ruiz said.

"The area is mountainous, but the main problem there is the mountains have been shorn of trees," he said.

The heavy rain over the past few days could not be described as abnormal for this time of year, he said, but the dearth of trees created the dangerous situation.

"Before [the deforestation], there were no problems of flooding or landslides there," Ruiz said.

Heavy logging—much of it illegal—upland migration and agricultural expansion have steadily cut back the forests in the country. By the late 1980s

HEAVY/ A8

Officials fail to reach 4th town; death toll now 142

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN RICARDO, Southern Leyte—Through her college ring the body of a public school teacher was identified Sunday on the beach of Camiguin Island's capital town of Mambajao in northern Mindanao.

Paulina Cero Lagang was one of the victims of another tragedy that struck Southern Leyte when a tidal wave and landslides swept down to the sea at least 101 houses in the biggest village of San Ricardo Saturday afternoon on Panaon Island.

The tragedy came less than 24 hours after mudslides ravaged the neighboring towns of Liloan and San Francisco. Pintuyan, the fourth town on Panaon Island, was also reported to have been hit by landslides but there was no way to reach the area.

At around 4 p.m. Saturday, the coastal village of Pinut-an in San Ricardo was struck by a series of landslides and a tidal wave just as local officials were frantically trying to reach the village of Punta in San Francisco, where landslides hit about 300 houses Friday night.

"The husband of the mayor was on a veranda, but in the next instant, he van-

SLIDES/ A8

TOWSFOLK join rescuers in retrieving bodies buried in the mud in Liloan's Lutaw District. EDWIN BACASMAS

Loren: Let FPJ break the news

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE GUEST of honor did not show up, but his running mate did.

The usual motley mix of political players attended the Christmas party of the Council of Philippine Affairs on Saturday night, except the most awaited guest: action star and presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr.

But his rumored running mate, Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda, arrived close to midnight. The INQUIRER was told she had come from a meeting with Poe in Antipolo City to put the finishing touches to their ticket.

The two were expected to make their appearance at the par-

LOREN/ A20

2004 TICKET? Actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Loren Legarda walk down the aisle during last year's wedding of the son of a TV broadcaster.

Ople laid to rest among RP heroes

By Jerome Aning

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday led government officials, foreign dignitaries, war veterans and other mourners in bringing the late Foreign Secretary Blas F. Ople to his final resting place at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, a state honor that has been denied the dictator Ferdinand Marcos whom he had served loyally.

Ms Macapagal dropped a white rose into Ople's grave, soldiers fired a 19-gun salute and a helicopter showered orchid petals on the heavily guarded state funeral at Fort Bonifacio.

"This flag is presented to you on behalf of a grateful nation as a token of appreciation for the honorable and faithful service rendered by your loved one, Ka Blas Ople," the President told Ople's widow, Susana, as she handed her the Philippine flag that had draped her husband's casket.

Ms Macapagal, who wore a black dress, then saluted the man whom US Secretary of State Colin Powell had described as "a warm friend of the United States" and "a renaissance man who won distinction as an academician, author, legislator and statesman." Ople had also been hailed as "a national

OPLE/ A21

Giant lanterns star in Pampanga fest

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—This Christmas capital, known for its holiday lanterns, threw a star-studded bash on Saturday to celebrate the season. Fittingly, the stars of the show were eight giant Christmas lanterns, each measuring 18 feet in diameter.

At the event called Ligligan Parul (or Giant Lantern Festival), the lantern show featured lavish "dancing" patterns of stars, flowers and fans. The eight lanterns, borne on big trucks, were the entries of Barangays San Juan, Del Pilar, Sto. Rosario, San Jose, Sto. Niño, San Felipe, Dolores and Sta. Lucia, all villages south of the city.

Some of the giant lanterns, which by tradition are made to represent the Star of Bethlehem, were displayed next to the statues of village patrón saints carried on fully illuminated *carosa* (biers).

"Let us find our own stars through endurance, honesty and love," Fr. Ramon Torres, a Catholic priest, said after reading the prayer for world peace before 30,000 people.

For three hours, the audience at the jampacked amphitheater of SM City Pampanga stood, waiting for the best

GIANT/ A20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over Eastern and Central Visayas and Eastern Mindanao. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/22/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Widespread Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bro. Eddie's party needs Comelec OK

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE COMMISSION on Elections would still have to evaluate the application of the Bangon Pilipinas movement of spiritual leader Bro. Eddie Villanueva before the poll body approves its accreditation as a political party.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the application of Bangon Pilipinas would be reviewed by the poll agency's legal department. But the Comelec en banc would have the final decision on the accreditation, he added.

"Hopefully we can do this by Jan. 5," Abalos told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday, when asked if the decision would be out before the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy.

Waiting for approval

Villanueva, founder and spiritual director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide (JIL), said that he was awaiting the Comelec's approval of Bangon Pilipinas' application for accreditation before he would file his candidacy for president.

"Anyway, he (Villanueva) can file his COC even without a political party. That could come later," said Abalos.

Villanueva's announcement that he was joining the presidential race in 2004 has worried Malacañang since the President stands to lose one of her staunchest allies in the religious sector.

President Macapagal-Arroyo met last week with the JIL leader but failed to dissuade him from pursuing his planned run for the presidency.

Bishop Fred Magbanua, one of the leaders of Task Force Pagbabago, which is spearheading Villanueva's campaign, said Ms Macapagal "in so many words tried to convince Brother Eddie not to run."

Magbanua said that Villanueva would file his certificate of candidacy on Dec. 30.

Asked if Villanueva would back out, he said: "There is always the possibility, but that is very remote."

"He is not pressured at all," Magbanua said. "It is the [administration] that is worried because we are a big voting bloc. If they lose Brother Eddie's bloc, it would be a big loss for them."

Magbanua said the JIL had five million "constituency members" (not 7 million, as earlier reported) and 35 centers in key cities worldwide with big Filipino populations.

The Commission on Elections is set to implement absentee voting among registered Filipinos abroad for the first time next year.

Speaker Jose de Venecia has admitted that Villanueva "helped" former President Fidel V. Ramos in 1992 and himself in 1998, and "helped Gloria propel her ascent to the presidency."

Villanueva's supporters filed the application for the accreditation of the Bangon Pilipinas National Renewal Movement as a political party three weeks ago.

The Comelec, however, wants the group to submit additional requirements.

Abalos, however, said that no such application has been forwarded to the Comelec en banc as far as he knows. A member of Bangon Pilipinas is set to meet with Comelec representatives today.

Follow-up

Villanueva said that Task Force Pagbabago is following up the process at the Comelec.

According to Villanueva, the group would also discuss who would be his running mate and who would be included in his senatorial slate.

The Comelec en banc would also decide next week if any official of a political party would be allowed to come to the Comelec and with the proper authorization file the certificates of candidacy of their party's bets.

EVERYONE IS TOGETHER ON CHRISTMAS
Yesterday's Christmas party of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) saw a gathering of strange bedfellows. Among the guests were administration stalwart-turned-oppositionist Sen. Loren Legarda, left, who hinted that she will be actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s running mate *(See story on Page 1)* and activist with a cause Teddy Casiño, right. Looking on is Copa's Pastor "Boy" Saycon. EDWIN BACASMAS

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Danding gives NPC members free hand in picking top bet

By Carlito Pablo

BUSINESSMAN Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., founder of the Nationalist People's Coalition, is giving party leaders a free hand in choosing the presidential candidate they will support in next year's elections.

This was revealed by NPC Representatives Harry Angping (Manila) and Georgidi Aggabao (Isabela) to explain why the NPC, the country's second-largest political party, has remained silent on its choice for president from among the declared aspirants.

"We are free to choose the presidential candidate to support as well as to form our respective coalitions in the local level," Angping said.

Cojuangco's son Rep. Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco (Negros Occidental) was earlier quoted as saying that his father could be seen as supporting the election bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Some 25 NPC leaders, most of them incumbent congressmen, last week signed a covenant with Lakas-CMD leaders in Malacañang in support of Ms Macapagal's election.

Angping and Aggabao, however, noted that "majority" of NPC leaders preferred actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"This covenant signing would show that some NPC leaders would go for GMA but the majority in NPC are for FPJ," Angping said.

In a separate interview, Aggabao explained that NPC is not fielding a national ticket with presidential down to senatorial candidates.

"Since the party has no bets in the national level, we have the free hand to choose our presidential candidate," Aggabao said.

Aggabao noted that the NPC's primary concern is to ensure the victory of its local bets from congressmen down to mayoralty bets.

"We're on our own when it comes to the national elections," Aggabao said.

The NPC leadership met early in December where Cojuangco formally announced that he was no longer interested in running for president.

But according to deposed president Joseph Estrada, Cojuangco, a long-time ally, remains with the opposition and has not crossed over to the administration camp as rumored.

Cojuangco is reportedly a strong supporter of Poe's. "Let him be the one to say (which candidate he is backing), not Charlie," Estrada said. *With a report from Armand N. Nocum*

Majority of women for GMA, says solon

By Carlito Pablo

SHE'S BEEN called "Ate Glo," "Ina ng Bayan," and other decidedly feminine terms of endearment.

If only for that, President Macapagal-Arroyo has a clear edge over her 2004 challengers who are all male, according to Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza (Lakas, Quezon City).

Daza predicted that "majority of women" would go for Ms Macapagal in next May's elections.

"Her pro-women and pro-family policies are her strongest pull for women votes," the solon said in a statement. "She has demonstrated sincerity in supporting issues that protect the welfare of women and the unity of the family."

Daza did not forget that another presidential aspirant iss counting on the women's bloc. Former Education Secretary Raul Roco, whom women's groups have declared an "honorary woman," has also claimed to be the women's choice.

Daza said she was basing her assessment on the President's proven track record in supporting women's rights. She recalled that Ms Macapagal, among other things, signed into law Republic Act 9208, or the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act.

The law prescribes stiff penalties against the prostitution of women and children.

Likewise, Daza said, the President was supportive of a pending measure imposing heavy sanctions for physical abuse against women in intimate relationships.

She knows from her own experience that the women's vote is crucial, Daza said. She claimed that in the 2001 elections, the backing of women leaders in the urban poor sector helped her defeat then Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and former Congressman Edcel Lagman in the race for QC's fourth congressional district.

Estrada willing to host Ping, Poe

By Christine O. Avendaño

IN A last-ditch bid to unify a divided opposition, deposed President Joseph Estrada will try to bring rival presidential aspirants actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson together in a meeting before Christmas to decide on who should be the opposition's standard-bearer.

"He (Estrada) told us that he will get them (Lacson and Poe) together, just the two of them, before Christmas," Lacson's campaign manager, Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, said yesterday. "In the end, the decision will be made by the two candidates," he added.

Zamora said that Estrada bared his plan during a "small get-together" lunch given by the former president late last week for around 30 to 40 colleagues.

At Capinpin

Zamora said the Poe-Lacson meeting will likely be held at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal where

Estrada, who is facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan, has been detained for some time now.

In a phone interview, Zamora said that Estrada offered his help because he knows it would be better for the opposition to field just a single candidate in the 2004 elections.

According to Zamora, some people invited to the lunch prodded Estrada to mediate as Poe and Lacson appeared to be both determined to run for president and, thus, affect the opposition's chances at the polls.

Dec. 29

Poe is said to be filing his certificate of candidacy on Dec.29, according to leaders of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino which is led by Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Yesterday, Zamora said Lacson, a member of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), will file his certificate on the same day.

Estrada had promised in a meeting with Lacson on Dec. 4 he would help unify the opposition, which continued to be split on its support for Poe or Lacson.

But the bickering between supporters of Poe and Lacson continued yesterday, with each camp issuing a statement against the other under the LDP logo.

Angara, LDP chair and president, leads the faction supporting Poe, while LDP secretary general Rep.Butz Aquino leads the faction backing Lacson.

In a statement, Aquino's faction issued an advisory to all LDP regional offices nationwide informing them that Angara had been placed under "preventive suspension" effective immediately for "acts of disloyalty, acts inimical to the interest of the party and culpable violation of the LDP Constitution."

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Ping pals start new lives

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO FORMER police protegés of opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, who were implicated in the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case and the Dacer-Corbito kidnap-slay, have begun new lives in the United States.

Senior Philippine National Police officials told the INQUIRER that Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino, now based in Miami, Florida, is studying nursing, while Senior Supt. Cezar Mancao was working as a security guard.

A source identified with Lacson's camp said Aquino and Mancao were able to "iron out all legal impediments" to allow them to legally work in the US.

"They just want to begin a new life so I don't think there's anything wrong with that," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The two former PNP officials, the source said, decided to try their luck in the US because they believed they no longer had careers to go back to in the Philippines.

"It's but appropriate for them to keep themselves busy considering the very long time they've spent on floating status," he said.

Another source, a police general, admitted there was nothing that barred the two disgraced officers from working or studying abroad.

He said there was still no arrest warrant issued against them in connection with their alleged involvement in the deaths of 11 suspected Kuratong Baleleng gang members in May 1995 and in the abduction-murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito, in 2000.

Mancao and Aquino reportedly fled to the US via Hong Kong in June 2001, three months before the Department of Justice filed criminal charges against them before a Manila Regional Trial Court. They have been in hiding since then.

The PNP dropped Mancao from its rolls last June while summary dismissal proceedings were underway for Aquino for going AWOL.

The two officials, along with slain Senior Supt. Teofilo Vina, allegedly planned the Dacer-Corbito murder which began with the victims' abduction on Zobel Roxas Street and South Superhighway in Manila on Nov. 24, 2000.

Dacer's and Corbito's charred remains were later found in a dry creek in Indang, Cavite.

At the time of the murder, Mancao, Aquino and Vina were top officials of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force headed by Lacson who was the concurrent PNP chief.

Mancao and Aquino are also among the 33 officers accused, including Lacson, in the Kuratong rubout case.

A Quezon City court has dismissed the charges against Lacson and other officers accused in the Kuratong murder case for lack of probable cause. State prosecutors have appealed the court ruling.

Nur's been busy

DAVAO CITY—Jail appears to agree with former rebel leader and ARMM Governor Nur Misuari.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza told a press conference here on Thursday that Misuari has managed to adapt to his detention at a military camp, to the point of siring two children with one of his wives, Tarhata Ibrahim.

"Misuari is doing fine in jail," Dureza said.

Misuari, former chair of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has been held for almost two years at Camp Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, pending a trial on rebellion charges.

Dureza, who recently visited Misuari, said he "was in excellent health. He keeps himself preoccupied by writing a book."

He said he kidded Misuari: "If government kept you here for 12 more years, I'm afraid you would have a dozen more children." *Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 22, 2003
4th Week of Advent

1st Reading: 1 S 1:24-28
Gospel: Lk 1:46-56

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit exults in God my savior!

He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and people forever will call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me, Holy is his Name!

From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence.

He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up those who are downtrodden.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers,

Abraham and his descendants forever."

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Commentary

Mary's song invites the Church to praise and prophecy. To praise: to celebrate, as we do too seldom, the sheer kindness and graciousness of God; to truly delight in the fact that our God is a God who sees the lowly and lifts them up. To prophecy: to challenge the world with the new world Mary sees God bringing into being, a world where the powerful, rich and proud are brought low, and the lowly, the hungry and the poor are raised up and cared for. Mary's song becomes our song, when we rejoice in the beauty of our God and when we strive to overturn the world's secure arrangements of power and wealth.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (Aggravating circumstances)—Evident premeditation—The trial court correctly ruled that the qualifying circumstance of evident premeditation when the execution of a criminal act is preceded by cool thought and reflection upon the resolution to carry out a criminal intent within a space of time sufficient to arrive at a calm judgment. Obviously, the acts of appellant in the present case can hardly be described as a product of reflective thought or deliberate planning toward a decisive resolve to kill the victim. On the contrary, the confrontation that escalated to a violent brawl was quite spontaneous, casual and incidental. Verily, the brutal killing was not the result of a previous plot or sinister design to end the life of the victim. The elements of evident premeditation are as follows: (a) the time when the accused decided to commit the crime; (b) an overt act manifestly indicating that the accused clung to the determination to commit the crime; and (c) the lapse of a period of time, between the determination and the subsequent execution of the crime, sufficient to allow the accused an opportunity to reflect upon the consequences of the act. As found by the trial court, the prosecution failed to present sufficient evidence to establish any of the foregoing requisites. To be sure, when there is no showing how and when the plan to kill was decided or how much time had elapsed before the crime was carried out, there is no evident premeditation. In a criminal prosecution—especially in cases involving the extreme penalty of death—nothing but proof beyond reasonable doubt of every fact necessary to constitute the crime with which the accused is charged must be established. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Panganiban, people vs Escarlos, G. R. No, 148912, September 10, 2003] BY R. B. VERA

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Supreme Court asked to void citizenship law

By Jerome Aning

A PARTY-LIST group has asked the Supreme Court to void a law granting dual citizenship to Filipinos residing abroad and to stop the Department of Justice from implementing the act.

In an eight-page petition, Hector Calilung of the party-list group Advocates and Adherents of Social Justice for School Teachers and Allied Workers said Republic Act 9225, which allows dual citizenship, also indirectly allows dual allegiance.

This, he said, was "diametrically opposed to the constitutional principle that dual allegiance is inimical to the national interest."

Under RA 9225, natural-born citizens of the Philippines who have lost their Philippine citizenship by reason of their naturalization as citizens of a foreign country could reacquire their Filipino citizenship by taking an oath of allegiance to the Republic.

The petitioner said RA 9225 "cheapens Philippine citizenship because it permits the latter's reacquisition by the simple expedient of again swearing an oath to the Republic without requiring the swearer to repudiate his or her foreign allegiance."

As a teacher, Calilung said, he had always taught his students that "loyalty can only be given to one sovereign. No two sovereigns can occupy that first place in our scheme of loyalty and values. One must necessarily come before the other."

He cited previous SC rulings that citizenship is "a priceless gift, not a commodity or wares to be displayed when required and suppressed when convenient" and which must be "deserved to be retained."

Calilung also wants the SC to stop the DOJ from enforcing the law, which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed last Aug. 23. The DOJ is empowered to provide immigration and naturalization regulatory services and implement the laws governing citizenship and the admission and stay of aliens.

Calilung described himself as "a natural-born Filipino whose interest in keeping the value and purity of Filipino citizenship uncontaminated, unimpaired and intact gives him the requisite standing to assail any legislative act which tends to belittle or depreciate (such) a precious right."

The government said the dual citizenship provision would allow former Filipino citizens to acquire property and maximize their investments in the country.

DOJ chief backs deputy's decision on murder raps

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Simeon Datumanong has defended his deputy for overturning his (Datumanong's) own ruling dismissing murder charges against Iriga City Mayor Emmanuel Alfelor.

Datumanong said Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida had "the authority" to revive the triple murder charges against Alfelor and seven others for the killing of a Department of Trade and Industry official and two others in Camarines Sur in December 2002.

"He made his judgement as acting (DOJ) secretary. As acting secretary, he had the authority to act on the case," Datumanong said.

Datumanong had earlier ordered the case dismissed, but while he was at a United Nations conference in Mexico on Dec. 9, Calida revived it.

Alfelor's lawyers, Carlo Osi and Jason Jose Ilao, have charged Calida before the DOJ with "usurpation of authority." They claimed Calida was not the acting secretary "when he reversed the decision of a sitting secretary" on Dec. 9.

The two lawyers also said Calida reversed Datumanong's order "with undue haste" and acting in "evident bad faith."

When asked if his statement meant the complaint against Calida had been dismissed, Datumanong said he had not even seen the two lawyers' complaint.

Calida said he ordered the filing of the charges against Alfelor and his co-accused because there was probable cause in the case.

Alfelor was tagged in the murder of DTI district officer Reynaldo Licup, his driver Geoffrey Remodo and mechanic Rommel Barillos in Baao, Camarines Sur on Dec. 2, 2002.

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Jeweler's scion is one of Calabarzon's most wanted

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAMBA CITY—A famous jeweler's son has been declared one of the Calabarzon region's most wanted criminals five months after allegedly killing two businessmen in Barangay Makiling here.

The Calabarzon region is composed of the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

Supt. Rafael Aguilar, chief of the regional intelligence office, said that beginning last Thursday, Jose Ma. Panlilio, son of the late Fe S. Panlilio, ranked 20th on the area's most wanted list, with a P500,000 price on his head.

Judge Antonio Pozas of the Calamba Regional Trial Court had issued an arrest warrant for his capture last month.

Panlilio, whose family owns a chain of jewelry shops in the country, is the primary suspect in the robbery-murder of half-brothers Albert Gutierrez, 31, and Ariel Real, 28.

Police said copies of Panlilio's records would be sent to all units in areas where the suspect was recently seen, to help in his capture.

"We will also post his photos in public places and publish them in newspapers," Aguilar told the INQUIRER. He said the reward could go up by P75,000 if his office's request is approved by Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina. This would make Panlilio the region's "most expensive" wanted man.

These developments spelled fresh hope for the victims' relatives, especially their mother, 67-year-old Carmencita de Castro, a veteran trial lawyer who is handling the case herself.

"I hope this will help us get justice for my murdered sons," De Castro said in an interview. "I would like to appeal to the leadership of the national police to (intensify) their efforts and arrest this man."

She said she never thought she would be fighting her biggest court battle after 41 years of lawyering.

She filed the case against Panlilio after police and witnesses identified him as the man who gunned down the victims, her sons by two former husbands.

Calamba City police records showed that Panlilio called up the victims days before the incident, offering them his Starex van for P300,000. The vehicle was with a car dealer in Laguna.

In the early morning of July 15, Panlilio again called up the brothers at their Quezon City home. They could all go together and pay for the vehicle in Laguna, he said. De Castro recalled that she even chatted with the suspect before she gave the phone to her older son.

But instead of going to the car dealer, Panlilio brought the victims to an obscure section of Palacio Real subdivision in Makiling, where he allegedly shot them at close range. Residents from a nearby squatter's area said they saw the suspect fleeing.

GRIEVING mother and lawyer Carmencita de Castro, right in left photo, beside photos of her slain sons, Ariel and Albert; above is the suspect, Jose Ma. Panlilio.

The victims started in the used-car trade only two years ago, according to their mother.

She introduced them to Panlilió, whom she had met in November last year through a real estate agent.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Panlilio in his Dasmariñas Village residence in Makati City but was told that he had not been home since July.

Marcoses, too, don't want amnesty—Imee

By Joey A. Gableta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Like deposed President Joseph Estrada, the Marcos family is cold to the idea of being granted political amnesty by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee R. Marcos said that while her family was very "much willing to put closure on the unfinished business from the past," the amnesty proposed by the President appeared to be part of a "political circus" intended to win votes in next year's elections.

Marcos added that while Ms Macapagal has aired the proposal, no formal notice has been extended to those concerned.

"It has been the position of the Marcos family from the very beginning... to put closure to the unfinished business from the past. But it is extremely difficult to understand exactly what the offer is inasmuch as there were all kinds of rather vague offers in the past... and at the same time, there were stringent nasty requirements that were difficult to consider," Imee said.

She said the amnesty program offered by the President was nothing but part of her bid to win a full term in May 2004.

"It's just part of her political circus. We cannot react based on publicity alone; there should be a proper legal understanding as to what it exactly constitutes," she said.

Marcos also dismissed the claim of the ruling Lakas-CMD that Ms Macapagal was a sure winner after some opposition members of Congress and local government officials switched and joined the party.

Among those who recently pledged allegiance to Lakas was Imee's uncle, Tacloban City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez.

Marcos said she believes the officials' support for the President was "just for show."

"When they chant GMA, GMA, they probably mean to say Give Money Already. They must be haggling for the release of their SARO (special allotment release order) and NCA (notice of cash allocation) or something," she said, referring to the pork barrel enjoyed by members of Congress.

Marcos, who was in the city for a private visit, predicted that many of the President's supporters would abandon her and join the opposition.

"We could still see a lot of changes," she said.

She admitted being interested in running for a Senate seat with the unified opposition under Fernando Poe Jr.

Eaglet brings Xmas cheer

DAVAO CITY—Born just five days before Christmas, conservationists here are regarding the hatching of a 123-gram eaglet as one of their best gifts of the season.

The eaglet, a product of the natural pairing of eagles Jag and Ka Brianne, started to "pip" its shell on Thursday morning at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) offices in Malagos, Baguio District here.

By Saturday, it had completely broken free, according to PEF officials.

Domingo Tadena, PEF director for conservation breeding, said eaglets normally break out of their shells 24 hours after the first pip.

The still unnamed eaglet, however, had a hard time doing this because it was in an abnormal position inside the egg, Tadena said.

He said he and three other staffers decided to help the eaglet lest it die.

"It's a merry Christmas at the Philippine Eagle Foundation. We won't be getting much sleep with the newborn and a couple more eggs to take care of, but an addition to the dwindling number of Philippine Eagles is always a joy," said Dennis Salvador, PEF executive director, after the bird's successful hatching.

The eaglet is the 14th hatched and bred in captivity since 1992. The center now has 30 eagles, including those caught in the wild.

Like all previously hatched eaglets, the new bird needs godparents, who would foot the bill for its feed and other expenses. *Joselle d. R. Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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SAUDI PRINCESS RAPPED

Kin seek help for abused OFW

By Norman Bordadora

THE FAMILY of a domestic helper in the employ of one of Saudi Arabia's princesses yesterday reiterated their appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo to help in rescuing the girl from alleged maltreatment in the royal household.

Glendalyn Amazona, a maid in the palace of Madawi Khalid Bin Turki al-Saud, has yet to be presented by her employers to the Philippine consulate general in Jeddah, which had earlier required her personal appearance to prove that she was in good health.

"The princess' representative told the Jeddah police early in November that my sister was okay, but until now, they have not brought her to the consulate," said Amazona's brother Jessie, who sought the help of the overseas Filipino workers' group Migrante International.

Fears for safety

"Our family fears for my sister's safety," said Jessie. "In a letter sent secretly through another Filipina in the household, she said the princess beat her up and sometimes dragged her down the stairs by the hair."

He said that although Glendalyn's contract would not end until next month, she could come home now using her accumulated leaves. "But we have been warned that the princess doesn't just allow servants to leave even after their contracts have expired.

The Department of Foreign Affairs' Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) were dependent on the consulate general in Jeddah for information regarding Glendalyn, Jessie said.

Unfortunately, he said, the consulate general knew nothing. "It doesn't even press for the princess to (comply with its request that she) present my sister," he said. "We hope the President can do something ... despite the involvement of a very influential member of the royal family."

As early as October, the DFA-OUMWA sent the consulate general in Jeddah a request to ascertain Glendalyn's well-being, following her family's receipt of a letter supposedly from her and detailing her ordeal:

Banged head

"They hurt me physically," read a letter dated July 2003. "They bang my head against the door or on the wall. They even drag me down the stairs while pulling my hair. They don't pay me. They make me work the whole day without rest and food. There was a time I didn't sleep for two straight days."

During an investigation on Nov. 4, a representative showed up at the Shamalia police station instead of the princess and told authorities and the Philippine mission that Glendalyn was all right.

The consulate insisted on seeing Glendalyn and set another investigation date. Today, two months later, she has yet to show up.

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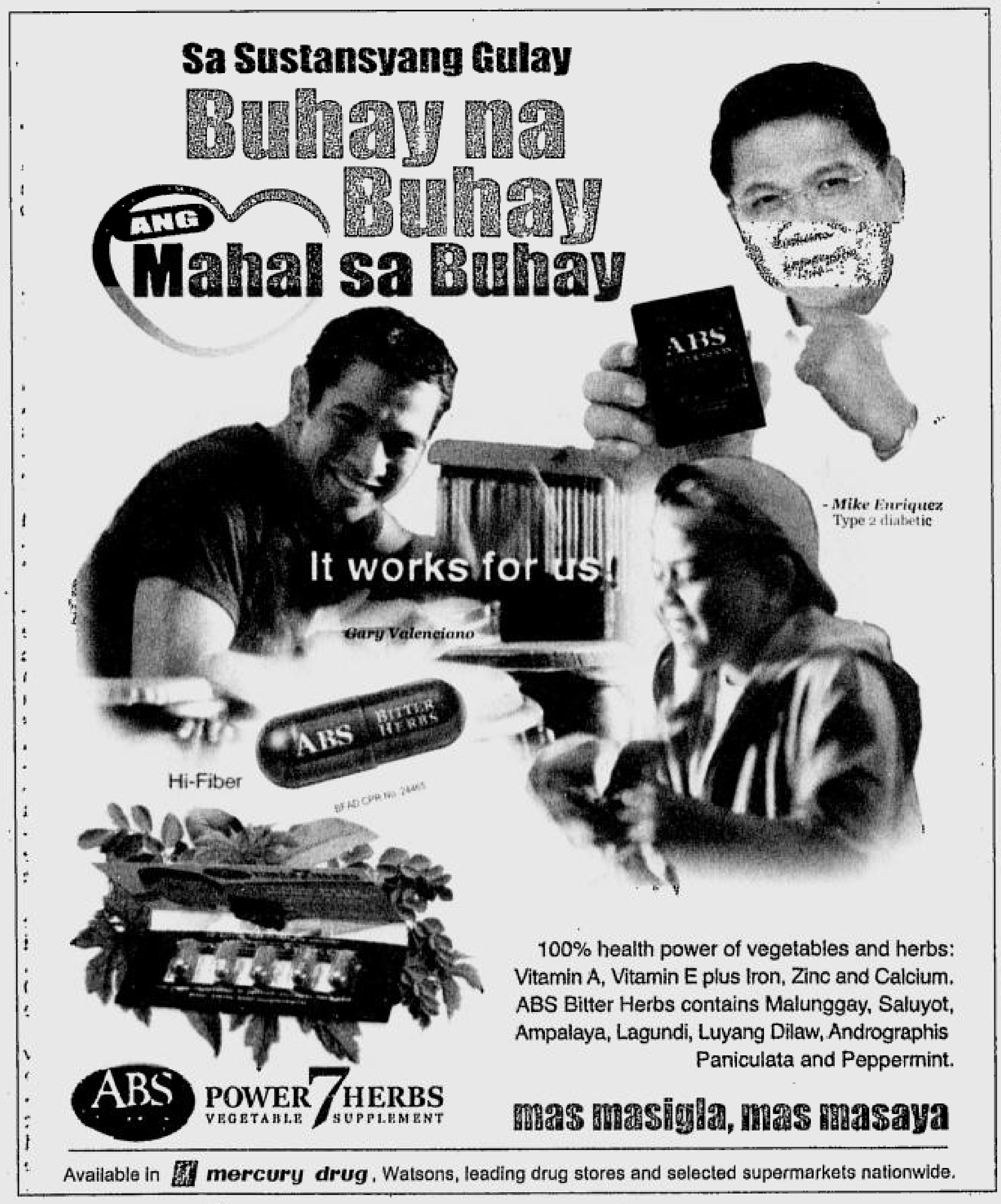
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Slides hit 3rd Leyte town

From page A1

ished because of that wave," Allen Olayvar of the Office of Civil Defense said. Olayvar was referring to former San Ricardo Mayor Vicente Mejia, husband of Mayor Virginia Mejia.

About two-thirds of Pinut-an, some 8 km from the town proper, was covered by mud that had come from different directions. It had a population of about 3,500.

At least 142 people (22 in Liloan, 97 in San Francisco and 23 in San Ricardo) were believed to have died in the landslides. Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias feared the death toll could rise.

As of press time yesterday, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) said 83 had been confirmed dead in Southern Leyte and Mindanao, 23 injured and 120 missing.

"I am deeply saddened that this kind of tragedy happened to our people in the midst of the Christmas holidays," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in Malacañang.

Several bodies believed to be victims of the Pinut-an landslides and tidal wave were seen floating in the waters off Camiguin, according to reports from Camiguin provincial officials.

Camiguin Gov. Pedro Romualdo said his men had wanted to conduct a search for more bodies in the waters off the island but were stopped by strong waves.

"The weather [is] too bad and even travel by sea from one place to another is very risky. Right now, we are awaiting word (from officers on the ground) as to when we can come in so that we can oversee the overall relief, rescue and rehabilitation," Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters in Manila.

Chinooks, tornado

Ms Macapagal said Washington would send in Chinook helicopters, an all-weather troop and cargo carrier.

The Chinooks would come from a US military base in Okinawa, Japan, she told reporters, adding they may arrive in a couple of days.

Heavy equipment from the country's Safet Mining Association were also being rushed to the disaster sites.

The President said the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance was also offering financial assistance to the victims.

The landslides and flooding could be the country's worst disaster this year. Fifteen people drowned in flash floods in the Caraga region in Mindanao on Monday. Eleven of them were reported in Surigao City, three in Agusan del Sur and one in Agusan del Norte, according to the NDCC.

In Monkayo town in Compostela Valley, a landslide killed a woman.

The President said she also received reports of landslides in T'boli in South Cotabato; Diwalwal; Naga, Cebu; and between Bislig and Hinatian in Surigao del Sur.

In Bohol, three people died in floods brought on by five days of rains in the towns of Trinidad and Antequera.

In Barangay Bato in Maasin City, Yol Markines drowned while crossing the river.

Another resident was hurt and 49 others went missing when a tornado hit Barangay Pinutan in San Ricardo, according to a report by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Reports from San Francisco showed that 33 bodies had been recovered, 64 remained missing and were feared dead, five were injured and 256 survived, according to Southern Leyte Vice Gov. Eva Tumol, who was in Maasin.

In Barangay Punta, two landslides hit the coastal village late Friday. The force of the landslides carried hundreds of houses to the sea. Debris, galvanized roofing materials and even whole houses were seen floating in the waters off San Francisco.

Mother embracing kids

Television images and pictures of the tragedy were grotesque: One showed a mud-splattered man desperately trying to dig out a body with a crowbar, while a companion tried to pull the cadaver from the muck with his hands.

An elderly woman, who lost most of her loved ones, wept and said she wished she also had died. Rescuers described digging up bodies of whole families buried together, including a mother embracing her children.

In Liloan, a mother wept as she cleaned the muddy remains of her son with water from a garden hose amid a throng of onlookers.

RESIDENTS swarm the landslide area in Lutaw District in Liloan.

EDWIN BACASMAS

> Television images and pictures of the tragedy were grotesque

In a rural morgue, wooden coffins bearing pieces of paper with the scrawled names of the dead lay side by side, lit by melting candles on a table. Relatives were arriving to sort out the dead and look for loved ones among the bodies, some wrapped in cellophane.

The rescue team led by Lerias that traveled by motorboat to San Francisco could not reach Punta. Punta is only 8 km from the poblacion, but all roads leading to the village were blocked. They tried to go to the site by motorboat but strong winds forced them back to the town proper.

Bad weather

Search and rescue operations were hampered by bad weather. Two Air Force helicopters, with military doctors on board, were dispatched from Cebu to Punta, but strong winds forced them to land in Liloan.

The weather was so bad it changed in minutes. The sun would shine for a while, followed by strong gusts and rain.

Lerias' team proceeded by motorboat to San Ricardo but they could only land on the town proper's wharf. The affected area, Pinut-an, less than 10 km from the town proper, has remained isolated.

The governor, who brought rice and canned goods to San Ricardo, said food would be brought to the area yesterday, even if provincial personnel would have to crawl their way through the landslides that blocked the roads.

Lerias, who talked to Ms Macapagal on the phone yesterday, said she asked her to send rescue ships because the small motorboats were helpless in the face of strong waves.

She said the President wanted to go to Liloan yesterday, but she said she advised her against it because of the bad weather.

Burial

In Lilo-an, the recovered bodies of the victims were brought to the church and buried at 2 p.m. yesterday. Michael Napallacan, a resident of Lilo-an involved in the recovery operation, said only nine bodies of 19 people buried in the landslide in Lutaw district, Barangay Poblacion were recovered as of yesterday.

He said town officials decided to immediately bury the bodies because they were already emitting a foul odor.

Buried yesterday were Irene Orano, 15; her niece Crescilmae, 8; Marilyn Yap, her daughter Ma. Joy, 8; couple Romeo and Editha Mondala and their children Salem, Dodong and Melinda.

Editha was the last to be recovered at 1 a.m. yesterday. Rescuers said the recovery operation using shovels had to be stopped because of the weather. Those digging for the dead were already very exhausted and needed to rest.

Liloan still experienced heavy downpours on Saturday evening. The rain stopped yesterday, but strong winds prevailed, the rescuers said.

Power in Liloan and other areas in Southern Leyte, including the capital Maasin City, was restored at 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Col. Nestor Añonuevo of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Central Command (Centcom) based in Cebu City, said a Navy vessel with rescue teams departed from Tacloban City at 4 a.m. yesterday for Lilo-an.

In Bohol, the fatalities were identified as Teofilo Gupita, 63, and Felipe Sotera Jr., 59, of Barangay Hinlayagan and Hinlayagan Ilaud in Trinidad; and Antonita Antasuda, 33, of Tupas, Antequera.

The Office of Civil Defense in the province reported that the national road connecting the towns of Jagna and Sierra-Bullones had been rendered impassable due to landslides and fallen trees.

Landslides were also reported in Barangays Malbog and Sabangahan in Jagna, preventing vehicles from using the provincial road.

Residents in the towns of Guindulman and Loboc were evacuated Friday due to floodwaters.

Guindulman Mayor Oriculo Granada Jr. said waist-deep waters in low-lying Barangay Tabajan prompted residents to seek higher ground at noon. He said about 160 families were affected. There was no report of casualties.

A landslide was also reported in Candasag, Loboc. Ten households of about 39 people were affected but no casualties were reported, said Rita Requeron, acting Red Cross administrator in Bohol. *With reports from Jhunnex Napallacan and Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau; Christian V. Esguerra and Juliet L. Javellana in Manila; and AP and AFP*

Heavy rains …

From page A1

forests covered 22 percent, or 6.6 million hectares of the country from 34 percent in the previous decade, according to the Indonesia-based Center for International Forest Research.

It said most of the degraded areas were mountainous and as a result faced "severe erosion problems."

The weather could also pour trouble down on Leyte, which is near the equator and subject to volatile equatorial air systems.

Ormoc tragedy

On Nov. 5, 1991, unprecedented massive flash floods descended on Ormoc City in Leyte, killing about 8,000 people and leaving about 50,000 others homeless.

"That one was caused by a thunderstorm concentrated in one area, turning it into a funnel that unleashed sudden flooding," Ruiz said.

An average of 19 storms and typhoons hit the Philippines every year mainly from the Pacific, killing an average of 500 people, official data showed.

The 1991 and 2003 Leyte disasters were unique in that they happened outside the typhoon season.

Ruiz said the weather bureau had noticed in Leyte weather systems associated with the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) as well as the edge of a cold front over China when the rains began last week.

The ITCZ phenomenon, which occurs on both sides of the equator, leads to thunderstorms and relatively low surface pressures and causes a strong upward motion of air that is laden with precipitation. The edge of the cold front, meanwhile, interacts with warmer air from the Pacific triggering rainfall, Ruiz said.

No warning

The weather bureau's daily forecast didn't carry warnings of possible flash floods and land slides in the areas affected by weeklong rains because the heavy rains were caused by the ITCZ and not by a severe weather disturbance such as a depression or a storm.

"We released a flood warning on Dec. 18 when Pagasa spotted the low pressure area east of Mindanao. As per standard operating procedure, we released it to the Office of Civil Defense which is mandated to disseminate the information," flood forecaster Jun Paat told the INQUIRER.

Pagasa forecasters said that it had been raining over the affected areas as early as Dec. 14, but the unusually heavy downpour came on Dec. 19 with the low-pressure area near Mindanao. The low-pressure area formed part of the ITCZ.

"Pagasa only issues warnings of flash floods and landslides (in the daily weather bulletin) during severe weather disturbances like tropical depressions, storms and typhoons when we really expect heavy rains," Sawi said.

"With the ITCZ, we just warn of widespread rains (as we did on the afternoon of Dec. 19)," he added.

Sawi said that Pagasa had no way of predicting the volume of rain that would fall on any particular town or city. Pagasa, thus, issues warnings of scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms over a region.

Paat said that the continuous rains and the expected heavy downpour caused by the low-pressure area near Mindanao on Dec. 18 prompted Pagasa's flood forecasting office to release a flood warning to the OCD.

In the decade that followed the Ormoc disaster, the government built a series of slit dams, the first of their kind in the country, and bridges around the city.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who unveiled the newly completed first phase two years ago, said the dams were "designed to trap floating logs and debris to prevent them from clogging up the river channels."

The government also built drainage works, hydraulic drops and slope protection structures along the Anilao and Malbasag rivers to protect Ormoc from the floods unleashed by heavy rains.

But these measures have been of little use to the scores of missing villagers and feared dead after the weekend's landslides. *Reports from AFP and Norman Bordadora*

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ANG PROBLEMA

Dahil sa sunod-sunod na kidnapping, pagbobomba, kudeta, at SARS outbreak, natakot ang mga turista, dayuhan man o Pinoy, na bumisita sa ating bansa kung saan patuloy na naghihikahos ang industriya ng turismo.

AKSYON NI PRESIDENT GLORIA

- Alinsunod sa kanyang 8-point agenda, inatasan ni President GLORIA ang Department of Tourism (DOT) na buhayin ang turismo sa bansa.
- Sa pakikipag-isa ng DOT sa pangunguna ni Secretary DICK GORDON, Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), at pribadong sector, matagumpay na naipatupad ang mga malaking proyekto tulad ng:
  - WOW PHILIPPINES INTRAMUROS - Dumalo ang 16 na rehiyon ng Pilipinas sa Manila upang ipakita ang pinakamaganda at pinakamahusay sa kanilang turismo, kultura, kasaysayan, tugtugin at sayaw, pagkain, at pista.

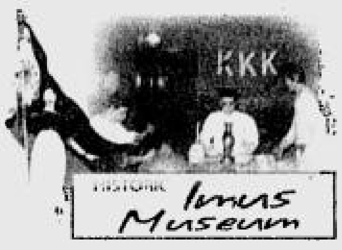
  - BAGUMBAYAN LIGHT AND SOUND MUSEUM - Isang bagong museyo sa Intramuros tungkol sa ating kasaysayan at kay Dr. Jose Rizal. Hinihimok tayo nito na wasakin ang mga pader sa ating kaisipan upang umaksyon bilang isang bayan na matatag at malaya.

Intramuros & Rizal
Bagumbayan Light and Sound Museum

  - WOW NORTHERN PHILIPPINES HILAGA - Ang napabayaang Paskuhan Village sa San Fernando, Pampanga ay ngayon isang showcase ng turismo, agrikultura, kultura at kasaysayan ng mga rehiyong Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, at Cordillera Regions.

WOW PHILIPPINES
HILAGA

  - VICTORIES OF THE REVOLUTION LIGHT AND SOUND MUSEUM - Isang Museyo sa Imus, Cavite na ginugunita ang tagumpay ng mga Pilipino sa himagsikan laban sa imperyalismo at kolonyalismo.



- Naglunsad ang DOT ng malawakang kampanya upang mapaganda ang imahe ng Pilipinas. Nagpalabas ng WOW PHILIPPINES at MORE THAN THE USUAL advertisements sa mga international tv stations tulad ng CNN at BBC.
- Noong nagka SARS outbreak, naki-isa ang DOT sa iba't-ibang sangay ng pamahalaan at pribadong sector upang ma-contain ang sakit. Pagkatapos ng masamang epekto ng SARS sa tourism arrivals, naging agresibo ang DOT sa pag-promote ng bayan.
- Pinatakbo ang programang Volunteer-12 o V-12, na naghikayat sa halos 7 Milyong Pilipino sa abroad na dalhin ang kanilang dayuhang kaibigan sa Pilipinas upang magbakasyon.
- Ginawan ng identification at accountability system ang mga taxi at taxi driver upang madali itong MAKITA, MAHANAP, at MAHULI kapag may krimen na naganap laban sa mamamayan at turista.

ANG RESULTA: TRABAHO, NEGOSYO, POSITIBONG IMAHE - "Tourism Means Jobs"

- Pagkatapos ng ilang taong pagbaba ng tourism arrivals sa Pilipinas, tumaas ito ng 7.6% noong 2002 dahil sa agresibong aksyon ng gobyerno. Kahit pagkatapos ng SARS, kung kailan bumababa ng tourism arrivals sa buong Asia, hindi nagtagal ay bumalik na sa positive growth rates ang arrivals sa Pilipinas.
- Nagkaroon ng LIBO-LIBONG TRABAHO AT NEGOSYO sa industriya ng turismo. Sa Intramuros, 4000 na trabaho ang nalikha, at ang benta ng mga concessionaires ay umabot na ng Php 100 Million.
- Napabilib ang mga international tourism organizations sa bansa at sa liderato ng Pilipinas.
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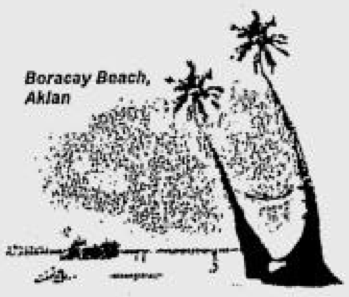
- Dumalo dito ang liderato ng turismo sa Asia para sa tatlong international conventions: PATA Board of Directors Meeting noong 2002, ang International Convention on Tourism Recovery and Anti-Terrorism noong December 2002, at ang World Tourism Organization Tourism Week noong June 2003. Ito ay nagsabi sa lahat na ang Pilipinas ay isang maganda at mapayapang tourism destination.

Whale Watching
Donsol, Sorsogon

Boracay Beach,
Aklan



Si President GLORIA, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, at Tourism Secretary DICK GORDON habang nag white water raftling sa Cagayan De Oro

> **" Pag maraming turista, masusunod ang pakay ng ating gobyerno. May trabaho, may edukasyoh, may tahanan, may pagkain sa bawat mesa."**
>
> *-President* GLORIA

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
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BAYAN KO, SAGOT KO!

NGAYON LANG!

Napa WOW PHILIPPINES ang buong mundo.

Si President GLORIA at Tourism Secretary DICK GORDON sa waterfalls, sa Villa Escudero, Tiaong, Quezon

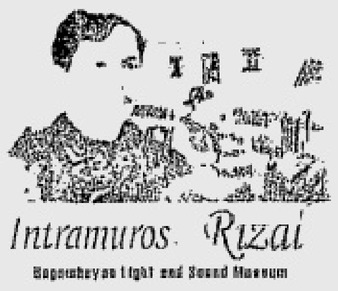
ANG PROBLEMA

Dahil sa sunod-sunod na kidnapping, pagbobomba, kudeta, at SARS outbreak, natakot ang mga turista, dayuhan man o Pinoy, na bumisita sa ating bansa kung saan patuloy na naghihikahos ang industriya ng turismo.

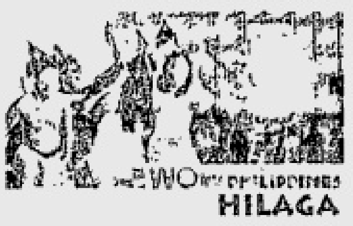
AKSYON NI PRESIDENT GLORIA

- Alinsunod sa kanyang 8-point agenda, inatasan ni President GLORIA ang Department of Tourism (DOT) na buhayin ang turismo sa bansa.
- Sa pakikipag-isa ng DOT sa pangunguna ni Secretary DICK GORDON, Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), at pribadong sector, matagumpay na naipatupad ang mga malaking proyekto tulad ng:
  - WOW PHILIPPINES INTRAMUROS - Dumalo ang 16 na rehiyon ng Pilipinas sa Manila upang ipakita ang pinakamaganda at pinakamahusay sa kanilang turismo, kultura, kasaysayan, tugtugin at sayaw, pagkain, at pista.

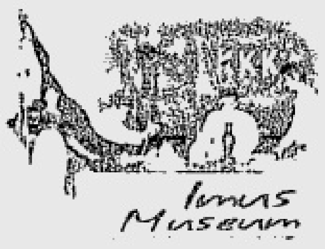
  - BAGUMBAYAN LIGHT AND SOUND MUSEUM - Isang bagong museyo sa Intramuros tungkol sa ating kasaysayan at kay Dr. Jose Rizal. Hinihimok tayo nito na wasakin ang mga pader sa ating kaisipan upang umaksyon bilang isang bayan na matatag at malaya.


Intramuros Rizal
Bagumbayan Light and Sound Museum

  - WOW NORTHERN PHILIPPINES HILAGA - Ang napabayaang Paskuhan Village sa San Fernando, Pampanga ay ngayon isang showcase ng turismo, agrikultura, kultura at kasaysayan ng mga rehiyong Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, at Cordillera Regions.



  - VICTORIES OF THE REVOLUTION LIGHT AND SOUND MUSEUM - Isang Museyo sa Imus, Cavite na ginugunita ang tagumpay ng mga Pilipino sa himagsikan laban sa imperyalismo at kolonyalismo.



- Naglunsad ang DOT ng malawakang kampanya upang mapaganda ang imahe ng Pilipinas. Nagpalabas ng WOW PHILIPPINES at MORE THAN THE USUAL advertisements sa mga international tv stations tulad ng CNN at BBC.
- Noong nagka SARS outbreak, naki-isa ang DOT sa iba't-ibang sangay ng pamahalaan at pribadong sector upang ma-contain ang sakit. Pagkatapos ng masamang epekto ng SARS sa tourism arrivals, naging agresibo ang DOT sa pag-promote ng bayan.
- Pinatakbo ang programang Volunteer-12 o V-12, na naghikayat sa halos 7 Milyong Pilipino sa abroad na dalhin ang kanilang dayuhang kaibigan sa Pilipinas upang magbakasyon.
- Ginawan ng identification at accountability system ang mga taxi at taxi driver upang madali itong MAKITA, MAHANAP, at MAHULI kapag may krimen na naganap laban sa mamamayan at turista.

Si President GLORIA, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, at Tourism Secretary DICK GORDON habang nag white water raftling sa Cagayan De Oro

ANG RESULTA: TRABAHO, NEGOSYO, POSITIBONG IMAHE - "Tourism Means Jobs"

- Pagkatapos ng ilang taong pagbaba ng tourism arrivals sa Pilipinas, tumaas ito ng 7.6% noong 2002 dahil sa agresibong aksyon ng gobyerno. Kahit pagkatapos ng SARS, kung kailan bumababa ng tourism arrivals sa buong Asia, hindi nagtagal ay bumalik na sa positive growth rates ang arrivals sa Pilipinas.
- Nagkaroon ng LIBO-LIBONG TRABAHO AT NEGOSYO sa industriya ng turismo. Sa Intramuros, 4000 na trabaho ang nalikha, at ang benta ng mga concessionaires ay umabot na ng Php 100 Million.
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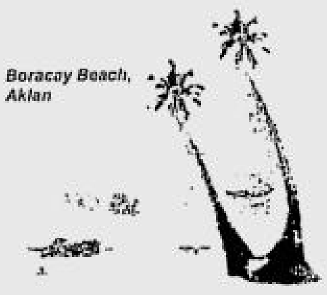

" Pag maraming turista, masusunod ang pakay ng ating gobyerno. May trabaho, may edukasyon, may tahanan, may pagkain sa bawat mesa."

-President GLORIA

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
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BAYAN KO, SAGOT KO!

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Libya seeks reward for weapons pledge

TRIPOLI/VIENNA—Libya sought on Saturday to shed its pariah status, meeting with UN nuclear inspectors after a surprise announcement that it was abandoning efforts to build an atomic bomb and other banned weapons.

As the United States and Britain promised rewards, Tripoli acted swiftly to prove its commitment to the world at large. A top Libyan official met the head of the UN nuclear watchdog to discuss its proposals to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Almost 15 years to the day since his agents brought down a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie and eight months after US and British troops toppled Saddam Hussein on suspicion of developing banned weapons, Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi has now opened the prospect of an end to sanctions and a return of US oil firms.

Britain said Libya had been close to making an atomic bomb, but information about Tripoli's weapons capabilities was vague.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, met a senior Libyan official on Saturday for a hastily arranged meeting in Vienna.

"Dr ElBaradei met with Libya's secretary of the National Board of Scientific Research to discuss the Libyan government's desire to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction program," IAEA spokesperson Mark Gwozdecky said.

Libya said on Friday it was ready to accept strict IAEA nuclear safeguards. Western diplomats said that prior to the Libyan announcement, the IAEA had been growing increasingly concerned about signs Tripoli wanted to develop atomic arms.

Several Western diplomats told Reuters there were indications Libya had been trying to gather a team of nuclear experts from ex-communist states in eastern Europe in what looked like the beginnings of a future weapons program.

Libya's decision to voluntarily dismantle its atomic weapons program is almost unprecedented—only post-Apartheid South Africa has done so before—and Britain was swift to point out the contrast with Iraq, suggesting Saddam's fate could have been different if he had cooperated.

Some US officials said it was too early to say when, or if, Washington will lift sanctions. Tripoli's announcement on Friday was the culmination of secret talks with Britain and the United States launched around the time of the Iraq invasion.

US President George W. Bush, who also accuses Iran and North Korea of seeking nuclear arms, said he hoped others would follow the example set by Gadhafi, a man former US President Ronald Reagan once called a "mad dog." European critics of the invasion of Iraq remarked pointedly that it showed peaceful diplomacy could bring about disarmament.

"Libya wants to solve all problems and we want to focus on development and advancing our country. This (weapons) program does not benefit our people or country," Foreign Minister Mohamed Abderrhmane Chalgam told Al-Jazeera television. *Reuters*

LETTING THE LIGHT SHINE

Kim McGann, 17, of Chicago, wears a wreath of candles during a Lucia Day festival in Chicago Dec. 13, 2003. According to legend, St. Lucia was a Sicilian maiden who wore candles to light the way as she brought food to Christians who were hiding in caves. Lucia Day marks the beginning of the Christmas holiday in Sweden. AP

Russia offers 'honeymoon in space' for $40M

MOSCOW—Despite banning marriages in space, Russia is offering newlyweds the chance to swap Venice or the Niagara Falls for a cosmic honeymoon romance by buying a $40-million ticket to space, officials said Sunday.

Russia's Rosaviakosmos space agency is proposing together with US firm Space Adventures for couples to fly together to the International Space Station (ISS) on a Russian Soyuz space craft, said Rosaviakosmos spokesperson Sergei Gorbunov.

"Under our contract with Space Adventures we have an option for sending two space tourists at once on a Soyuz. So theoretically, young married couples could make use of this possibility," he told the Itar-Tass news agency.

The asking price for a 10-day visit to the ISS is around $20 million (16 million euros), a sum only two space tourists—Californian businessman Dennis Tito and South Africa Internet millionaire Mark Shuttleworth—have so far been willing to pay.

Both tourists jaunts were organized by Space Adventures. The price for a couple would be twice that amount.

Candidates, who would travel on board one spaceship accompanied by a professional astronaut, would have to show they are in good health and undergo eight to 10 months of training, the official said.

In addition, "they will have to prove they don't have bad habits, money from illegal sources and don't belong to any terrorist organization," Gorbunov added.

The Russian space official did not specify whether sex would be permitted for the space-bound honeymooners.

Astronauts are banned from having sex in space because of the possible risks to the embryo if a female cosmonaut became pregnant. *AFP*

Ministers delay decision on site for $10-B reactor

WASHINGTON—A group of countries working together to produce energy in the same way as the sun have postponed a decision on whether to site a nuclear fusion reactor in Japan or France.

Officials involved in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) met in private near Washington on Friday and Saturday to choose a host for the project, which is worth $12 billion (10 billion euros).

It was unclear when the members of the joint venture—the United States, China, Russia, South Korea, the European Union and Japan—would meet again.

But a French official said they would have to choose between the fishing village of Rokkasho in Japan and a site at Cadarache in southern France by February.

"At the end of the meeting ... it was agreed by all parties present that no definitive choice could be made at this stage," France's Research Ministry said in a statement issued in Paris on Saturday.

Nuclear fission, in which energy is released by splitting the atom, powers traditional nuclear plants and is used to make weapons. In nuclear fusion, energy is released when atoms are forced together.

The goal of the ITER project is to create a sustained nuclear fusion reaction that potentially will provide a safe and efficient source of pollution-free energy.

Apart from prestige, the economic stakes are high.

Construction of the reactor alone is expected to take a decade and to provide employment for about 2,000 workers.

The choice of site also has a political dimension, given transatlantic tension over French opposition to the US-led war in Iraq.

The US Energy Department, which hosted the ITER meeting, had said on Friday it expected a decision to be announced at the conclusion of the gathering.

French official Stephane Salord said a decision would now have to be taken by February and that voting rules could be changed to prevent another stalemate. It was not immediately clear why a decision had to be taken by February.

The European Union supports Cadarache, near the Mediterranean port Marseille.

Japanese officials say Rokkasho, home to about 12,000 people, offers the advantage of access to a port and ample supplies of sea and fresh water.

Both sides plan to keep pushing for their favored sites.

"It is disappointing for our country that we're unable to win the opportunity to host the facility, after an effort that involved the prime minister, the government, industry and academia," Science Minister Takeo Kawamura said in a statement. *Reuters*

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Vatican acknowledges miracle performed by Austria emperor

VATICAN CITY—The Vatican on Saturday recognized a miracle performed by Charles, the last emperor of Austria and a relative of the colorful 19th-century empress "Sissi," officially setting him on the path to beatification.

Beatification, in which a person is declared blessed, is a key step toward sainthood, itself attained following the Roman Catholic Church's approval of two miracles.

Charles sat on the throne of the now-defunct Austro-Hungarian empire between 1916 and 1918.

"He served his people with justice and charity. He sought peace, helped the poor, cultivated a spiritual life," said the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

It gave no details on the miracle attributed to him, but Charles' name appears on a list published on Saturday of people to whom the Congregation for the Causes of Saints has officially attributed a miracle.

Charles became heir to the throne after his uncle, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914—an event that set fire to a diplomatic tinderbox in Europe, triggering the First World War.

Charles was unable to stop the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a consequence of the war, and abdicated. He went into exile and died in the Portuguese island of Madeira in 1922.

He was a grand-nephew of Emperor Francis Joseph and his wife Elizabeth, widely known as Sissi, whose life has been the subject of numerous movies. *Reuters*

US plight in Iraq has parallels in Spanish-American War period

By David Morgan

PHILADELPHIA—Here's a quiz. What period of American history do the next three paragraphs describe?

A Republican president, hoping to distract attention from thorny problems at home, leads the United States to war against a decrepit government under the moral banner of liberating an oppressed people.

US troops, dispatched into battle on the basis of exaggerated intelligence reports, soon find themselves mired in a protracted guerrilla war in a strange faraway land they will have to occupy for years.

Meanwhile, America assumes a brash new imperial role yoked to the interests of its business elites, while at home, the FBI employs special police powers bestowed by Congress in a brutal crackdown on supposed enemies of the state.

That may all sound like a left-liberal account of the Bush administration's war on terror, but it's actually a glimpse into an earlier American era offered by "The Politics of War," a history of the years 1890 to 1920 that was written in 1979 by the late political essayist Walter Karp.

The period witnessed the outbreak of the Spanish-American War under Republican William McKinley and America's emergence from World War One under Democrat Woodrow Wilson.

But for Karp, a chain-smoking journalist with a passion for politics, the era not only saw America's metamorphosis from humble republic to world power. It also marked the defeat of what he termed the last great struggle to maintain a US republic "free of oligarchy, monopoly and private power." With US troops now in Iraq and Afghanistan, and pundits comparing US President George W. Bush to McKinley and Wilson, Karp's former colleagues have published a new paperback edition of "The Politics of War" (Franklin Square Press) as a jaundiced guide to America's current political debate.

"It's the best history book I know about that casts light on our current circumstances," said Lewis Lapham, editor of Harper's magazine, which takes a scathing editorial line on the Bush White House.

Karp, who died in 1989 at the age of 55, authored eight books, worked as a contributing editor at Harper's and wrote for several other magazines.

In the paperback's introduction, Lapham touts Karp as a literary dissenter in the tradition of Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce. But not everybody familiar with Karp's work embraces it as definitive history.

The New York Times Book Review once said Karp's writing flaws included "cranky speculation disguised as argument." "He's a better polemicist than a historian. It's not that he gets things wrong, but that he gets them only partly right," said Texas A&M University history professor H.W. Brands, author of "Woodrow Wilson" (Times Books, 2003). *Reuters*

Bin Laden tape: Arabs backing US are infidels

DUBAI—Osama bin Laden called the US war on Iraq a new crusade against Islam and said in an audiotape purportedly by the al-Qaida leader that Arab governments heeding US calls for democracy were "infidel" agents of America.

In the tape, aired on Al Arabiya television station on Saturday, he also slammed moves toward parliamentary representation and democracy in the Arab world.

"Know that this war is a new crusade against the Islamic world and is a critical war for the whole Islamic nation," said the voice on the tape.

In a sign the tape could be several months old, the speaker attacked the US-backed government of former Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, who resigned in September. He made no mention of his successor, Ahmed Qurie, or the capture this month of deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

In Washington, a CIA official said the tape appeared to be an old one that was previously broadcast.

"It appears to be the same audio that was released (previously)," the official told Reuters.

Analysts in the Gulf say the tape could have been an edited version of an Oct. 18 message aired by al Jazeera, another Arab satellite station, put together with some other old messages purportedly from Bin Laden.

Al Arabiya and al Jazeera have in the past broadcast similar statements said to be from Bin Laden. The CIA has said some of those appeared to be authentic.

But although some phrases were a repeat of rhetoric in previous tapes, much of the material in this tape was new.

"(Voices) in Iraq, as before in Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and others are calling for a peaceful democratic solution in dealing with apostate governments," he said, referring to the West.

"We need to be aware of the seriousness of this humiliating, errant path which contradicts the law of God ... Those who have entered the 'assembly of idolatry'—legislative assemblies—have torn down Islam," the voice on the tape said.

"They are making a big mistake. God knows that Islam has nothing to do with their actions. Islam is the religion of God and the legislative assemblies are the religion of the 'age of ignorance'," he added. "Age of ignorance" is an Islamic term used to refer to the pre-Islamic era, fourteen centuries ago.

Al Arabiya declined to say how it obtained the tape.

VIDEO grab shows an undated still image of Osama bin Laden which accompanied the broadcast of an audio tape attributed to him.

US President George W. Bush has said the US war in Iraq would be part of a new move toward democracy in the Middle East, where autocratic government has been the norm for decades as the Arab-Israeli conflict has drowned out calls for reform.

But many Arabs and Muslims view the Iraq invasion as an act carried out to serve the interests of Washington's ally Israel.

"Any government formed by America is a government of agents and traitors," the voice on the tape said, citing the Afghan leader Hamid Karzai and Abbas' short-lived government.

US forces have been engaged in an intense manhunt for Saudi-born Bin Laden since the Sept. 11 attacks on US, cities, blamed by Washington on al-Qaida.

He and Ayman al-Zawahri, his top deputy, are believed to be in the mountainous border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, although it is unclear whether they are together.

Reuters

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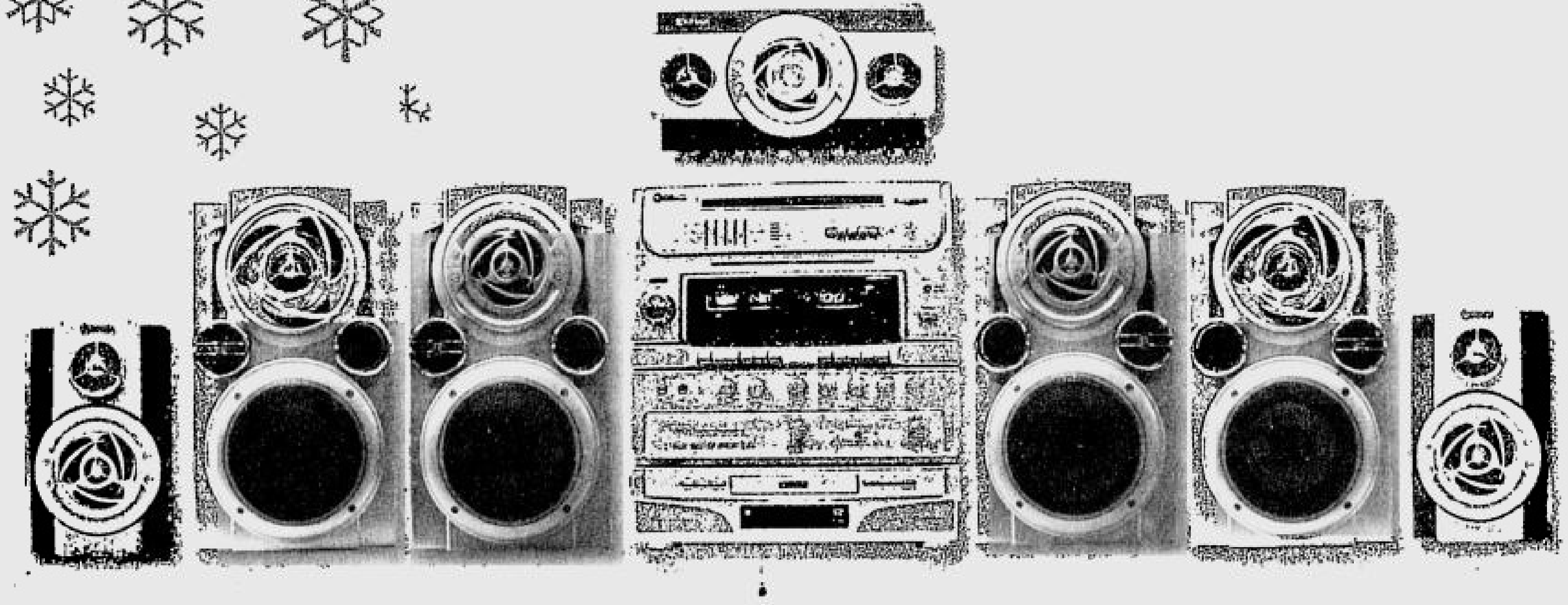

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SFDM, Q.C.

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Project 7, Q.C.
Natividad Ancheta
Malolos, Bulacan
Efren Manlutac
Navotas, M.M.
John Herrera
España, Manila
Marilyn Glico
Caloocan City
Dec. 11
Jim Baltazar
Sikatuna, Q.C.
Wilfred Sales
Novaliches, Q.C.
Aurelia Lacuna
Quezon City

Dec. 10
Mercylita Aguilar
Marikina City
Reynaldo Buday
Veterans Vill., Q.C.
Lemuel Santiago
Novaliches, Q.C.
Susan L. Dimacali
Ayala, Alabang
Yolanda Panela
Meycauayan, Bulacan
Melchor Benigno
North Ave. Q.C.
Bernadette Delegor
Imus, Cavite
Dec. 9
Riza Roldan
Tondo, Manila

E. Reyes
SFDM, Q.C.
Reynaldo Morales
Valenzuela City
Dennis Corteza
Mandaluyong City
Ma. Gina Africa Sy
Mandaluyong City
Victoria Feliciano
Camp Crame, Q.C.
Florante CM Magpantay
San Juan, M.M.
Emma Soriano
Canlubang, Laguna
Edna Garcia
Imus, Cavite
Dec. 8
Nancy Javier
Caloocan City

Adrian Abeleda
Quezon City
Elena T. Arenas
Quezon City
Guido S. Cuerda
Las Piñas City
Kelseat Corporation
Las Piñas City
Dec. 7
Manuel To
Binondo, Manila
Jesus D. Qualzon
Quezon City
Maribel Bozaga
SFDM, Q.C
Genalyn Mullasgo
Violago Homes Subd. Q.C.
Rogel Sandigan
Diliman, Q.C.

Chona Miranda
Cubao, Q.C.
Wilma Pumar
Quezon City
Guido S. Cuerda
Las Piñas City
Alfredo Tirol
Las Piñas City
Rhio Fuentes
Las Piñas City
Dec. 6
John Bernard Asuncion
Caloocan City
Gerry Tillada
Novaliches, Q.C.
Petronilo Pascual
Project 8, Q.C.
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Tondo, Manila
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East Greenhills, San Juan
Bethel Marketing
Cubao, Q.C.
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Dec. 5
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V. Luna, Q.C.
Herman Manalo
Valencia, Q.C.
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Muntinlupa City
Corazon Catanlag
Sta. Maria, Bulacan
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Dante Haw
Cubao Q.C.
Fortuno Reyno
Diliman, Q.C.
Florinia Mancilla
Muntinlupa City
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San Juan, Abra
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Mark Cabognason
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Saddam's final hideout was site of former glory

AD-DAWR, Iraq—Saddam Hussein was captured on the same farm where as a young man in 1959 he sought refuge after a botched assassination attempt on Iraq's then president Abdul Karim Qassim.

In October 1959, a 22-year-old Saddam escaped from Baghdad with government pursuers hot on his trail. He was recovering from a bullet wound to the leg when he reached Ad-Dawr 180 km north of the capital. In a fateful decision, a young farmer named Jassem Namach offered the future Iraqi president shelter.

"Namach was offering the customary hospitality of the Arabs to a man who was wounded and in danger," explained Sheikh Hassib Shahib Ahmed, head of the Namachs' al-Muwasat tribe in Ad-Dawr.

"He was just a farmer nearly the same age as Saddam."

After resting, Saddam slipped down to the eastern bank of the Tigris River by Namach's land and swam across the cold waters to the safety of his home village of Auja on the other side before making his way into exile.

Remembering his glory days 44 years later, Saddam, again on the run, this time from the Americans, showed up at Jassem's property and made the same request for help from Jassem's son Qaiss Namach Jassem, who now ran the family's five hectares of land.

But where Saddam's first exodus led to a successful escape from Iraq, this second visit to the farm by a much older man, already in hiding for eight months, ended in disaster for everyone involved.

Not only was Saddam captured by the Americans, but Jassem's eldest son Qaiss and his younger brothers were arrested that same night within hours of Saddam at another spot in Ad-Dawr, Sheikh Hassib told AFP.

"They protected Saddam out of loyalty," said Sheikh Hassib.

Hassib said Jassem, already stricken with cancer, was not speaking to anyone now about his sons.

That Saddam chose to stay with the Namach clan fitted his pattern during months on the run as he relied on tribal ties and alliances forged in his youth to stay safe.

Not only had the Namach clan come to his aid when he was a young political tough, but the family belonged to the same tribe as Izzat Ibrahim, Saddam's deputy, who is thought to be helping conduct the guerrilla-style insurgency against the Americans. Ibrahim, himself still on the loose, hails from Ad-Dawr.

As president, Saddam paid back his debt to the Namach family and secured their future loyalty by rewarding Jassem for his role in his 1959 escape.

"He decorated Jassem and everyone who helped him in hiding," Sheikh Hassib said.

Saddam hired Jassem's son Qaiss to manage his cooks in his presidential palaces around neighboring Tikrit and the other two brothers, Jassem and Ali, also found work inside the palaces.

"Qaiss was loyal," said Sheikh Hassib.

"The man, who supervises the palace cooks, would see Saddam at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Saddam would only eat meals prepared by someone he trusted."

While the US military does not think Saddam was staying in Ad-Dawr a long time before his arrest, Sheikh Hassib is sure Saddam had known he could stay on the Namach's land whenever he wanted. *AFP*

Sri Lanka PM, president junk unity talks

COLOMBO—Talks aimed at resolving a power struggle between Sri Lanka's president and prime minister have failed, raising fresh concerns for a fragile peace bid with Tamil rebels, political sources said Sunday.

New offers to end the deadlock were discussed at official-level talks last week, but they were rejected by both President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her rival Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, the sources said.

With no new talks scheduled, the country would enter the new year with the prospect of a snap poll, they said. Norway on Nov. 14 suspended its bid to broker an end to a Tamil separatist insurgency due to the political crisis.

"The officials' committee ended their meeting last week without agreement on another round of talks," a source close to both sides said. "They have not made any headway on the crucial issue of defense."

Officials engaged in the talks said the premier was insisting on full control over the military to ensure the implementation of the Oslo-brokered truce with Tamil Tiger rebels and to keep up his peace initiative.

On Nov. 4, Kumaratunga sacked three ministers and snatched from Wickremesinghe's Cabinet the portfolios of defense, interior and information.

Kumaratunga and Wickremesinghe, who are from rival parties, have held four rounds of unsuccessful talks. Their aides have held many more meetings.

Political analysts and diplomats have speculated that the president may try to end the impasse by calling parliamentary elections four years ahead of schedule. *AFP*

Paper disputes US version of capture

LONDON—Saddam Hussein was captured by US troops only after he had been taken prisoner by Kurdish forces, drugged and abandoned ready for American soldiers to recover him, a British tabloid newspaper reported Sunday.

Saddam came into the hands of the Kurdish Patriotic Front after being betrayed to the group by a member of the al-Jabour tribe, whose daughter had been raped by Saddam's son Uday, leading to a blood feud, reported the Sunday Express, which quoted an unnamed senior British military intelligence officer.

The newspaper said the full story of events leading up to the ousted Iraqi president's capture on Dec. 13 near his hometown of Tikrit in northern Iraq, "exposes the version peddled by American spin doctors as incomplete."

A former Iraqi intelligence officer, whom the Express did not name, told the paper that Saddam was held prisoner by a leader of the Kurdish Patriotic Front, which fought alongside US forces during the Iraq war, until he negotiated a deal.

The deal apparently involved the group gaining political advantage in the region.

An unnamed Western intelligence source in the Middle East told the Express: "Saddam was not captured as a result of any American or British intelligence. We knew that someone would eventually take their revenge, it was just a matter of time." *AFP*

THEY ENJOY BEING A MALE
Wodabe men perform a dance of male beauty at a festival in InGall, near Agadez in Niger, Sept. 26, 2003. The Wodabe, a nomadic West African tribe, value male beauty and are taught from an early age to look into mirrors to consider their appearance. AP

Briton dives 313m, sets new record

BANGKOK, Thailand—A British dive instructor plunged to a depth of 313 meters (1,026.9 feet) off the Thai coast to set a new world record for the deepest scuba dive, a news report said Sunday.

Mark Ellyatt took 12 minutes to make his descent off the resort island of Phuket in southern Thailand on Thursday, besting the previous mark by 5 meters, according to the Phuket Gazette newspaper. He then needed six hours and 40 minutes to safely return to the surface.

Failure to ascend slowly from deep dives can result in decompression sickness or death.

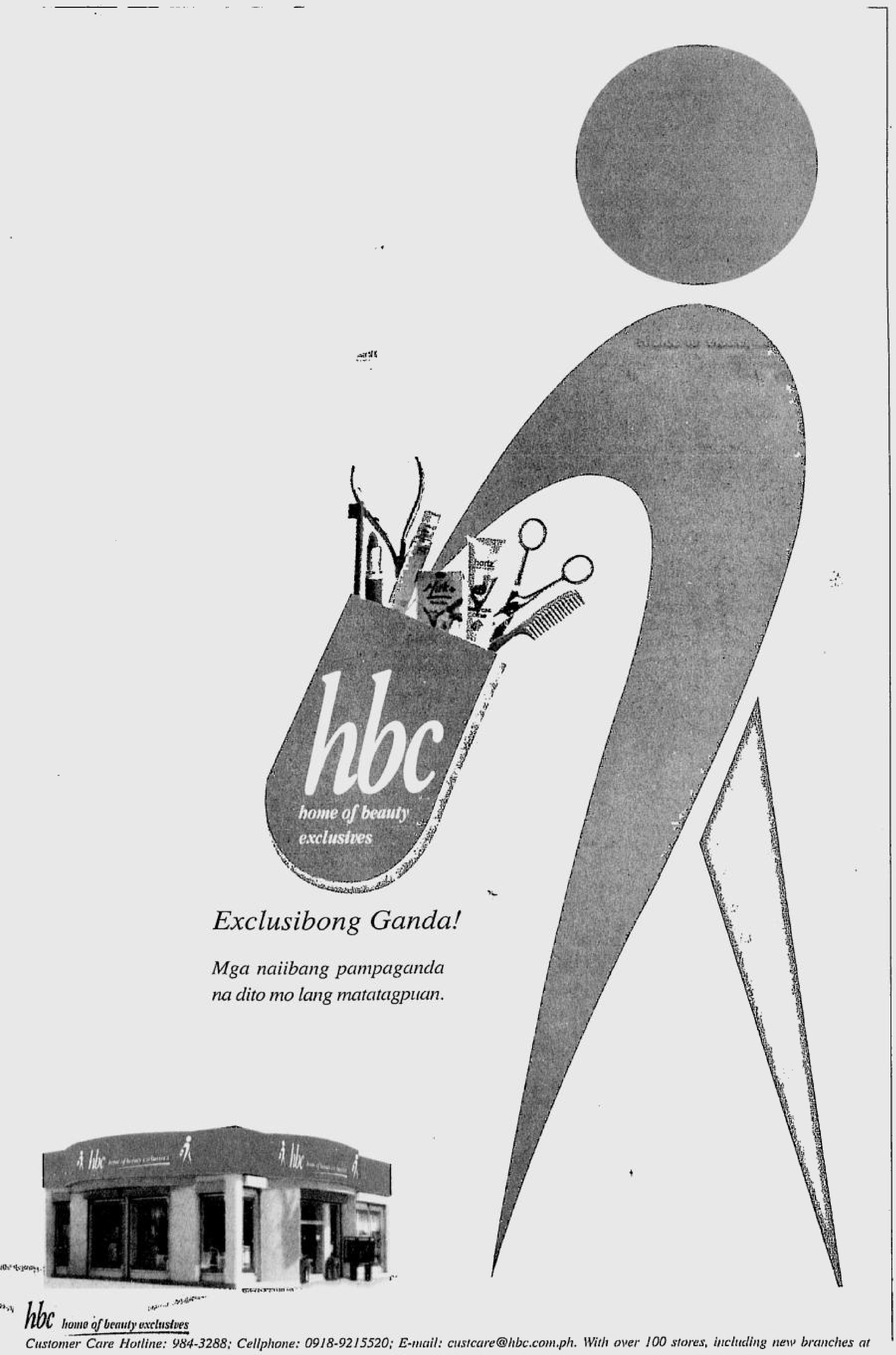
"It's a lonely trip, like a trip to the moon," Ellyatt said.

An independent verification of the record was not immediately available.

The previous world mark of 308 meters was set on Nov. 6, 2001 by British diver John Bennett off the island of Mindoro in the Philippines, according to Guinness World Records.

The depth of 305 meters had long been regarded as a major barrier.

Ellyatt dived with six tanks and had another 24 brought down to him by support divers who met him at various stages of his ascent. *AP*



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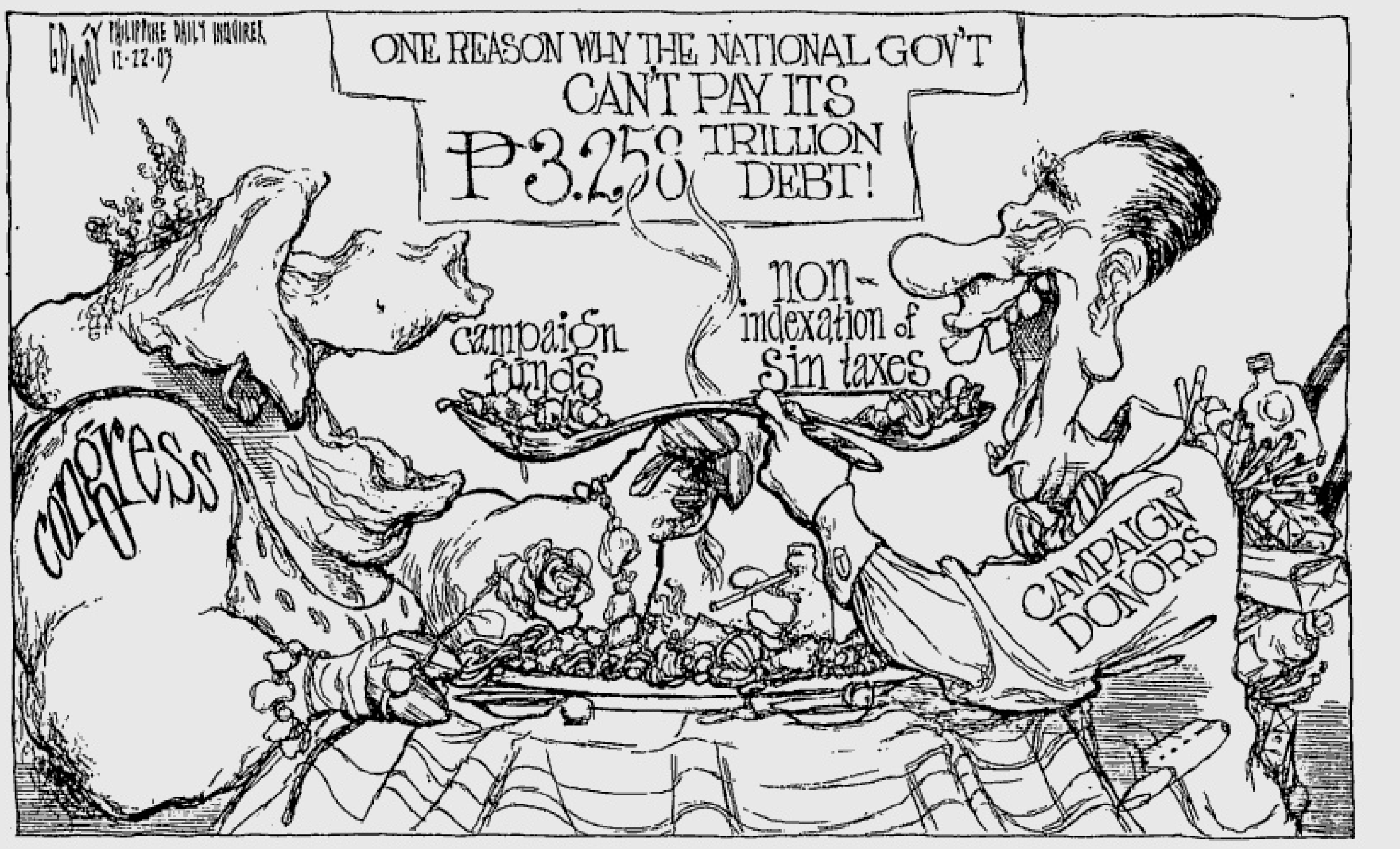
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ONE REASON WHY THE NATIONAL GOV'T CAN'T PAY ITS P3.258 TRILLION DEBT!
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EDITORIALS

Form

THE PRESIDENT'S proposed proclamation of general amnesty suffers from a fatal flaw: timing. Never mind substance—although we will need to say a mouthful about that. In terms of form, the proposal may be said to come with its own cyanide pill. It is so unsuccessfully disguised, it has no choice but to take its own life at the first sign of interrogation.

One of the paradoxes of recent Philippine politics involves the Macapagal enigma. How can one of the country's most popular politicians be such a political amateur? The true nature of President Macapagal-Arroyo's latest proposal is so obvious—a "political gimmick," opposition Sen. Sergio Osmena III said, with reason—we wonder whether Fernando Poe Jr.'s reported surge in the polls or Raul Roco's consistent ratings have driven the President to the brink of despair.

Unlike Senators Noli de Castro or Loren Legarda, Ms Macapagal has proven her vote-getting powers in more than one election. After winning a three-year seat in the Senate in 1992, she topped the Senate race in 1995 and the vice-presidential contest in 1998. And yet here she is, floating yet another trial balloon, issuing yet another policy-by-press release, as though she were a political neophyte desperate for publicity. Who does she think she is, Imee Marcos?

The unsubtle politicking, the inexpert timing, is not limited to the proposed amnesty. On the issue of constitutional change, for example, the President has weighed in too heavily and too late. Soon after she assumed the presidency in January 2001, Charter change became a hot-button issue. In part, this was because Ms Macapagal already had the right to run for a full term. Resistance to constitutional change proposals has always tended to coalesce around a central fear, that these would lead to an extension in the term of the incumbent. It happened with Quezon and Marcos, it almost happened with Ramos.

But Ms Macapagal refused to even consider Charter change then, saying she had enough work to do. In the last few months, however, the President has sung a different tune. The nature of her support is again transparently political—part of the elaborate courtship of the Nationalist People's Coalition, and of like-minded members of her own Lakas-CMD party. Her belated backing of Charter change, without a doubt, has May 2004 written all over it.

If she really feels strongly about both issues, the proper thing to do is to include them in her platform, and turn the May 10 election into a referendum. If Ms Macapagal believes "those involved in past political conflicts" should truly benefit from a blanket amnesty, let her test the idea at the polls.

Substance

ON THE FACE of it, a general amnesty proclamation seems innocuous enough, a necessary condition for national reconciliation. But the President's specific idea—an amnesty that includes out-of-court settlements with "those involved in past political conflicts"—is less than innocent.

Asked whether the Marcoses and deposed President Joseph Estrada would be included, President Macapagal said: "Well, precisely it is called past political conflicts, that's what it is called."

Political amnesty, however, covers only political crimes. The Marcoses are accused of epic graft and corruption; Estrada is on trial for plunder: none of their alleged crimes are political in nature. To include them in the proclamation's scope would be downright illegal.

But not to include them would take the wind out of the President's idea. Why raise the possibility at all, if the obvious sources of political division are excluded from the amnesty by definition?

Because—and the answer is clear to anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear—the real idea behind the proposal is campaign-related. It is meant to win votes.

This is a pity, because the President is raising false expectations and flirting with illegality through a controversial measure that isn't all that effective. Sen. Gregorio Honasan availed himself of an amnesty program in 1995. The President's own administration has implicated him in another coup attempt in 2003. If it didn't work then, why would it work now?

This Christmas, give gifts to abandoned animals

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said a mouthful when he told soldiers not to forget that it was she who raised their salaries. False. She did not raise the soldiers' salaries; Congress did. Congress passed the law mandating the increase and the President had no choice but to implement it. Even if she wanted to increase their pay, she could not have done it without Congress passing a bill authorizing it.

And the money for the pay increase did not come from her. It came, and will continue to come, from the taxpayers. The President's participation was only to implement the law.

The President's statement was a clear case of credit-grabbing and crass politicking. Though she did not say it outright, she was implying that the soldiers should support her and vote for her in gratitude for the salary increases. Wrong. Credit goes to Congress and to the people who are footing the bill. The soldiers should be grateful to them, not to anybody else.

In that same speech, she made another claim: that she is the "Mother of the AFP." She told the officers and enlisted men that "she was their mother and they were her children." That is not only preposterous but is an imitation of Imelda Marcos. Let me remind GMA of the people's reaction when Imelda made the same claim.

At a campaign rally, a speaker introduced President Marcos as the "Father of the Nation" and Imelda as the "Mother of the Nation."

"What do you want to be?" he then shouted to the audience.

The people shouted back: "Orphans!"

* * *

It's three days to Christmas. You haven't finished your Christmas shopping? Here's a quick and painless way to give gifts to your relatives and friends. Send gifts to them through the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS).

Here's how to do it: Donate an amount to PAWS in the name of your families and friends. PAWS will send them very nice cards announcing that you have donated such and such amount in their names, and "thank you" cards to you.

The donations will be used for the care of rescued and abandoned animals in PAWS' rehabilitation center at Loyola Heights. PAWS' Philippine Animal Rehabilitation Center (PARC) is like an orphanage for homeless dogs, cats and other animals. It houses them, feeds and gives them medical care until such time that caring families adopt them.

But before they are allowed to be adopted, PARC makes sure that their temperaments are ripe for adoption, that they are in good health and inoculated against diseases. You can see them at the rehabilitation center at Loyola Heights, on the left side of the flyover going to Marikina, facing east, behind the huge billboards of Sharon Cuneta and others. Visit them this Christmas season. Let that be your gift to the Baby Jesus who was born among animals like them.

The visit will be a learning experience to children and even to some adults. The abandoned dogs and cats seem to be so happy to have visitors. The dogs bark and whine and lick at your fingers from their cages as if to say "Take me home. Take me home with you." The cats crowd to the corner of the big enclosure nearest to you, as if to display themselves like models, mewing "Take me, take me. Be my master." Some kittens wander freely in the compound and may rub against your leg and look up at you as if to say, "I'm cute, am I not? Take care of me. I'll love you."

Visitors will be toured in the center, given lectures on animals and how to care for them, as well as the laws on animal welfare.

The dogs and cats come in a variety of sizes, colors and breeds, but most of them are mongrels. There is a huge Great Dane (but it is not up for adoption) and some poodle half-breeds.

Sad to say, only a very small portion of the animals are adopted. Filipinos prefer foreign breeds. Even in adopting pets, Filipinos are status seekers and have a colonial mentality. What they don't realize is that native dogs are more resistant to diseases and therefore require less veterinary expense. Because they are a mixture of many breeds, the mongrels, through survival of the fittest, retain only the most durable strains of their ancestors. What's more, because they are territorial, they make better guard dogs. They are also more intelligent and easier to train. Some of the biggest-earning dogs in the movies, television and the circuses are mongrels. Best of all, native dogs are more affectionate.

Filipinos also prefer to adopt puppies and kittens, not adult dogs and cats. But with puppies and kittens, you don't know what you're getting. You don't know how they will grow up, what their temperaments will have, how they will look like. With adults, you are already certain of their temperaments and characteristics; you already know how they look like; they won't change anymore.

PAWS survives entirely on donations, and they're never enough. It earns a little from selling souvenir mugs, T-shirts and other trinkets. The compound of the rehabilitation center was loaned by Meralco. The workers are all volunteers without pay. Almost all of the donations go for the food and medication of the animals. Even the veterinarians give their services almost free. You can have your dogs and cats spayed and neutered for half of what private veterinarians charge.

If you want to give gift-donations to your friends through PAWS, call Tel. No. 475-1688; ask for Oscar Lei.

Conscience

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

TERESITA Baltazar of Konsensyang Pilipino says Raul Roco should do a Doy Laurel and slide down to vice president for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Baltazar recalls that Laurel was eager to run against Ferdinand Marcos in the "snap elections" of 1986, but agreed to slide down as Cory's vice president, heeding Jaime Cardinal Sin's advice in that respect. Nene Pimentel, who made a name for himself as a staunch anti-Marcos crusader, wanted to challenge Marcos too, but bowed down to reason too. "What heroism, what statesmanship," Baltazar gushes.

Baltazar forgets to mention somebody else who could have gotten both leftist and yellow votes. He was Jose W. Diokno, the leading human rights lawyer at the time, one who had campaigned for civil liberties even before martial law. Cory would recognize the fact by making him the first head of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights after Edsa. Diokno shared solitary confinement with Ninoy Aquino after martial law, defended political detainees at a time when it was the riskiest thing to do, and was respected and admired by leftist and liberal alike. But he never cared much for power, being more content to live by the tenet, "Serve the people." For sheer self-sacrifice, you can't find a better person to gush over. What idealism, what purity of heart.

Baltazar is right about her facts, she is wrong about their significance. All she does by referring to that storied past is to draw attention not to what her boss, GMA, is but to what she is not. I do not now recall the context of Pimentel's expostulation in a letter to our editor some months go, but he did tartly conclude it with the words, "GMA is not Cory." That is the bottom of things. That is what Baltazar merely highlights.

To begin with, GMA is not Cory in one fundamental respect. Cory became the recognized leader of the anti-Marcos forces not just because she was the bereaved widow of Ninoy but because she fought ardently for justice—for her husband and all aggrieved Filipinos, as the slogan said. That was why Laurel, Pimentel and Ka Pepe gave way to her during the "snap elections" and that was why Juan Ponce Enrile, Fidel Ramos and Gregorio Honasan gave way to her in the meeting at Club Filipino to form the new government after Marcos fled. The first willingly, except probably for Laurel, who continued to dream of succeeding her, and the second grudgingly, Cory not being at Edsa itself during the mutiny. But she was there, spiritually at least if not physically. There was no question about it in people's hearts and minds: she was the leader.

If GMA is the leader of Edsa II, only she knows it. I remember that the first time she went to Hong Kong after Edsa II to woo the maids, she got asked that, which pissed her off. What did you do in the war, Ate? Her answer to it was that she had been secretly working to subvert the Erap government. It was so secret no one knew about it. I remember as well that in the acrimonious debates I had with friends who were with the Erap government, I was always stymied by one question they posed when they ran out of ways to defend Erap: "Would you rather have GMA than Erap?" Unfortunately, we mortals are not armed with prescience. I said yes then.

Cory was well loved, GMA is well loathed. Cory embodied the people's oppression and liberation, her fight for justice was the people's own. I remember too a speech Cory delivered at Luneta, which was aired by several intrepid radio stations. She spoke in her usual style, which was a near-monotone, which would normally not grip an audience used to bombast in political rallies. Darkness was settling on the city on a gray January, and lights were winking in many houses. Along Quezon Avenue, a strip that had then (as now) become home to hookers and "sauna baths," the kind where pretty maids sat all in a row with numbers on their bathing suits, as in a beauty contest except they weren't vying for the judges' approval, everything was still. Not a mouse stirred though it was past Christmas. Cory was speaking, and the world stood still. Eloquence has nothing to do with stentorian voices, it has to do with shared dreams.

Cory could win even if Marcos cheated, which the Comelec was expected to do. GMA cannot win even if she cheats, which the Comelec is expected to do. GMA isn't the addressor of *"Tama na, sobra na, palitan na,"* she is its addressee. The only difference is that instead of Vangelis' stirring "Chariots of Fire," all I hear issuing from Malacañang is "Otso-Otso." Truly, history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second as *baduy*.

And finally, however Cory turned out, she remained true to her word. She said she would not run again, and despite fawning supporters who kept egging her to—there was no lack of legal argument to thwart the Constitution—and despite knowing she could win hands down, she did not. At the beginning and end of her term at least, she was a class act.

GMA said on the day this country extols its national hero, Jose Rizal, that she would not run again. Despite the fact that it was force majeure—she had become very unpopular and had several corruption cases hanging on her head—and despite the fact that I had been suggesting that to her for some time, I was one of those who praised her for it. What heroism, what statesmanship, I said. As it turned out, it was merely a ruse to buy her time. Citing a public clamor only she and her advisers can hear, she has decided to run anyway. What, well, feel free to supply your nouns.

Konsensyang Pilipino is the name of the group Baltazar heads. If this is the kind of conscience she prescribes for the Filipino, he needn't fear the fires of hell in the afterlife. He'll be roasting in them on earth.

Can JIL deliver for Villanueva?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WITH BROTHER Eddie Villanueva, head of the Jesus Is Lord (JIL) Movement, "99 percent sure" of entering the presidential race, the May 2004 elections get merrier and more complicated by the day. Brother Eddie is a personal friend whom I consider a more qualified candidate than Fernando Poe Jr., and even Senators Noli de Castro and Panfilo Lacson. Villanueva has closely followed the politics here even as he has shepherded his flock for years; moreover, he has been running a TV show on current issues for some time now, with prominent personalities as guests and the exchange has always been informative and intelligent. But whether Villanueva can muster the seven million votes his group purports to command is another matter. The trouble is that a religious sect is not organized like a political party.

* * *

I had heard of Villanueva and even El Shaddai guru Mike Velarde contemplating joining the presidential derby, but frankly I never took the report seriously, as I thought these two religious leaders prefer to be kingmakers rather than king. The probable entry of Villanueva into the fray, however, stands to benefit President Macapagal-Arroyo more than anyone else, as political pundits and pollsters like Prof. Felipe Miranda of Pulse Asia have repeatedly stressed that the more candidates there are, the bigger the chances of the sitting President. It is said that in a race of six or seven candidates, GMA is bound to emerge No. 1. Thus, no one should be surprised if the opposition alleges that *pakawala* ni GMA si Brother Eddie.

* * *

There are reports that some prominent business and finance leaders are backing up FPJ not because they believe in his capacity or preparation to govern. It is said that they argue that if FPJ is certain to win, they might as well support him to make sure he gets to make the right decisions *at hindi magkalat*. Among those reported to be mulling support for FPJ along this argument is former finance secretary Roberto de Ocampo, president of the Asian Institute of Management and one time voted internationally as best finance secretary. Reports say that those close to De Ocampo are trying to talk him out of support for FPJ. If this is true, the AIM president should really reconsider, as it could be a serious abdication of responsibility to the Filipino people.

* * *

During this season of grace, as we commemorate the birth of the Son of God made Man, it is fitting to focus on the many examples of unselfishness and concern displayed by some people and organizations for other human beings. For instance, two ladies who head two big foundations, Susana V. Ople, widow of the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, and Rosie Lovely Romulo, were instrumental in extending help to students from very poor Metro Manila families who are helped by the Erda Tech Foundation, a subsidiary of the Erda Foundation that was founded in 1974 by the French-born 89-year-old Fr. Pierre Tritz. The Erda founder is currently convalescing from a fall in Sarreguemінnes, a French border town, under the care of his ardent friends from Erda Centre Europe such as Camille Gubelmann and Marie-Therese Feil.

* * *

The International Bazaar Foundation (IBF) chaired by Ms Ople has funded the complete training of 25 young women under the Erda Tech's "Palihan" program to the tune of over half a million pesos. Handling this sponsorship for IBF is its subcommittee on livelihood, chaired by Fe Cabactulan, which carefully screened and selected the beneficiary trainees upon recommendation of Fr. Tritz. Under the Palihan program these young women, who come from very poor families, acquire informal but intensive skills for one year, that will enable them to earn a living to immediately help their families. Palihan concentrates on skills-training for young women whose poverty has prevented them from obtaining a formal education; President Macapagal herself was attracted to Palihan's program, and last year she donated P5 million specifically for the training of young women from poor families from ages 18 to 25.

* * *

IBF's 25 trainees are taking up courses in beauty therapy, food service and office skills, which are coupled with work values formation. The IBF also allowed Erda Tech to exhibit its students' products in its annual International Bazaar last October, which is the IBF's main source of funds. Now on its fifth year, Palihan has graduated 634 trainees, a big number of whom are now working in various company partners of Erda Tech.

Another example of Palihan's networking includes the training of several young ladies in all aspects of beauty parlor service under expert *"balikbayan"* hairdresser Deo B. Cumarat in his well-appointed beauty shop, "Deo BC" in Cattleya Condominium, Salcedo Street, Makati. Deo unselfishly gives the Palihan trainees personalized lessons in haircutting, an expertise he developed in his over seven years in Europe and the Middle East—his way of repaying the Lord for his good fortune abroad, he says. Deo has big plans to involve more Palihan trainees.

* * *

Erda Tech was also the beneficiary of a recent donation from the Philippine Cabinet Spouses Foundation, headed by Lovely Romulo, wife of Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, that goes to funding the complete five-year training of one Erda Tech students from the first year on. What's significant about the PCSF's donation is that it will assure the complete technical high school education of a scholar from a very poor family; all Erda Tech students are selected from the lowest income bracket and helped to break the cycle of poverty gripping their families, through proper technical training. The PCSF, composed of the spouses of GMA's Cabinet, currently has some 30 to 40 members actively involved in civic work. For more information on assistance to Erda Tech, please contact Wilhelmina Martinez at 564-1857 or 564-2608.

Disturbing

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

SOME TIME ago I met, at a conference in Manila, a former schoolmate in high school, now an expat for the past several years in the United Sates. But he had kept himself abreast of developments here, especially those affecting the Muslims. In fact, the reason that he attended the conference was to see how he "could be of help" in "uplifting" the Muslim community.

He was bothered, he said, about stories of discrimination and prejudice against them and thought it unbelievable that "at this time and age" so much bigotry could still exist in a society that prides itself in being the showcase of democracy in Southeast Asia.

But he also wondered whether the Muslims themselves should not, in fact, take the greater part of the blame for this unfortunate state of affairs.

Quite apart from the continuing threat to peace and order posed by separatist elements and groups like the Abu Sayyaf that has inevitably generated dread and animosity among Christians and Muslims in general, there is the more insidious problem of the Muslim whose psyche, despite the benefit of education and privilege, cannot seem to conform to the basic principles of democracy.

We keep on demanding, he said, positions in the national government, but once we are there, what do we do?

What is it about Muslim officials, whether elective or appointive, that almost always results in an abysmal record of graft, corruption, incompetence, nepotism?

He went on to cite the autonomous government, the Amanah Bank and various other dismal failures of Muslims at governance and administration.

It was a question to which neither of us could find any definite answer, because definite answers like greed and lust for power could be applicable anywhere and to anyone, whether Christian or Muslim.

But the tragedy is, the educated, privileged Muslim should not be like "anyone," for the simple reason that he is, by the confluent circumstances of history and demography, to which he is inevitably accountable, not just anyone.

When discussing topics like this with fellow Muslims, I invariably borrow a phrase from a Basque writer whose name escapes me at the moment, who in writing about the difficult relations between his own ethnic community in the Iberian peninsula and the Spanish majority, defined this accountability as "the burden of the ethnic minority."

This burden, as he describes it, could more rightly be called responsibility—the responsibility of the ethnic minority to make himself as good as, if not better than, the majority. This, he said, was "working from within," which was "the only way" to co-exist, of gaining acceptance and in the more ideal situation, even of attaining recognition.

The obvious antithesis to this idea is of course the use of force, specifically armed struggle, because, emanating as it does from a numerically inferior sector, would only result in a cycle of covert attack by the inferior force and overt counter-attack by the superior force and so on, at the catastrophic expense of the populace.

We in this country especially, are witnesses to its consequences.

There is the government policy of appeasement in the guise of reconciliation; there are the erstwhile revolutionaries who, intoxicated by new-found power, metamorphose into perfect clones of the traditional politicians that they once fought against; and local chieftains, empowered by their share of the spoils, take their government positions as feudal turf and sinecures.

But deeper and more damaging is its effect on the relations between the minority and the majority: resentment against the government for what they perceive is giving in too much to the minority, mistrust and grudging tolerance.

And, to the Muslim community itself, falls the tragedy of generalization. Ignored in this equation is the productive sector of Muslim businessmen, academicians, professionals, scholars, scientists, artists, etc., who go about their business, obeying the law, paying taxes, getting themselves educated.

Now here we go again.

Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong who was the first chair of half (Region 12) of the Marcos version of the autonomous government, has issued an order on the eve of his resignation, for the review of the case of jailed former ARMM Gov. Nur Misuari who is being charged with rebellion; ordering further, that such review be conducted in Zamboanga City.

This of course has raised many questions, the more obvious of which are: why just Misuari and not the scores of those summarily arrested on suspicion of being members of the Abu Sayyaf and who are languishing in jail? In several cases their families don't even know where they are.

And why, in heaven's name, Zamboanga City? In the first, there is already so much animosity felt by the residents, especially Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat, against Misuari and his followers. They have unequivocally expressed this by consistently rejecting the inclusion of the city in the autonomous region. And not without reason.

More than this, we hope the good secretary is aware that not too long ago, the whole city was terrorized when a number of residents were held hostage and paraded as human shields by the forces of Misuari under his nephew Julhambri.

Zamboanga City remains the only refuge of the majority of peace-loving Tausugs who fled the devastation in Jolo that resulted from the attacks on the town by Misuari's forces in 1974. They just want to live in peace.

If only for this, we appeal to Secretary Datumanong: Don't.

* * *

Comment to nm19@my.smart.com.ph

Eid'l Fitr, Hanukkah and Christmas

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

STRANGE, but some people were saddened by the capture of Saddam Hussein. Yet television's unblinking eye showed it all in the eyes of the fallen fascist dictator, the same look he inspired in victims of his autarchy, genocide and terror. Saddam will be no legend in history's eyes, but a bearded target of disdainful slippers, and hisses of hatred for his long, tyrannical rule. He joins despots like Marcos, Ceaucescu and Pol Pot in history's cuspidor. With Herod.

Paradoxically, some who fought Marcos were looking for a dark lining in the silver cloud, and predicted a violent Islamist nationalist quagmire for US forces. They are unhappy because America successfully interfered in the internal affairs of a sovereign dictator she once supported, invaded his country, demolished the iron-fisted stranglehold of the Ba'ath and are loudly talking democracy, without so much as a by-your-leave from the Eurocommunist bloc at the United Nations. Yet, if the United States had done that to Marcos, I'd have rejoiced at the enlightened attitude, not groused about "external meddling" from US imperialists.

Still, even ideological anti-Americans are right about one thing. Saddam and Marcos were both dictators supported and tolerated by several US governments during the Cold War. It was wrong to do so. Now, in a stunning manifestation of that corrigibility which makes American democracy such a powerful evolutionary competitor in the history of big deeds and bigger ideas, President George W. Bush agrees and says so in an historic speech in Washington, D.C. that sets America's sails for decades:

"The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution. Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo. Therefore, the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. This strategy requires the same persistence and energy and idealism we have shown before. And it will yield the same results. As in Europe, as in Asia, as in every region of the world, the advance of freedom leads to peace. The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country. America has put our power at the service of principle. We believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that liberty is the direction of history. We believe that human fulfillment and excellence come in the responsible exercise of liberty. And we believe that freedom—the freedom we prize—is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all mankind."

The New York Post carried this commentary from Ralph Peters of the US Army War College: "President Bush's historic speech of Nov. 6 acknowledged that, in the distorted strategic environment of the Cold War, the United States made grave errors by supporting dictators and authoritarian regimes, imagining that such men and their acolytes guaranteed stability. Instead, the strongmen brought only misery to their people and crises to the rest of us."

Democracy as a form of government, has seen a vast increase in numbers since the 1970s when there were only about 40. By the end of the Cold War and the 20th century, dictatorships everywhere had fallen and there are now 120 democracies on earth. But not in the Middle East, the root of terrorism, of which Afghanistan is but a far outpost. Bush's idea is that America and the world will be safest when all nations are democracies and no one breeds the ideologies of murder. A genuine fear of annihilation can be a healthy thing. How wrong could that be?

Here is the metaphor. The nature of the global economy is such that there is only one airplane and all nations including America are on board. There are no parachutes. No one can opt out. Suicidal terrorists want to blow up the fuel tanks or kill everyone on the flight deck and first class, thinking the world could survive decapitation. America now knows it must secure everyone, or the war on terror will be won by amok nihilists who don't care if only cockroaches inherit the earth, as long as there are virgins in their paradise.

Sophisticates are saying it is time to pack up and leave Iraq. They are clueless about history in the making and the continuing peril, as was every Democrat candidate from *tokayo* Howard Dean to Wesley Clark, last week. Bush says it is only the beginning of America's mission in Iraq and the region. Most Americans will probably agree in the next election. The transnational Left and its unhappy allies will have to watch while America transforms the Middle East into something resembling East L.A. or even Eastern Visayas (a vast improvement over Baghdad, believe it or not).

Some people are worried that America might actually plant a successful democracy in Iraq. Among them are tyrants and dictators America knows well—from the young Bashir of Syria, the old mullahs of Tehran, the Saudi Royal family, and all the inspirers and financiers of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, himself, who would be a caliph over them all. Who wants to join that sad bunch when it's the joyous time of Eid'l Fitr and Hanukkah and Christmas? *(Visit my personal website http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)*

Dear Santa (or what some readers wish)

SINCE it's three days to Christmas and most readers have shifted to the holiday mood already, I will not be left behind. Today, there will be no hard stuff or discussion of errors in reporting.

Instead, I will devote the column to what I think some readers would ask from Santa Claus for the INQUIRER if asked to do so. The "wish list" consists of their response to my earliest request for them to complete the sentence "I would like the INQUIRER more if …"

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

The informal survey was conducted among the readers who write to me often about news reports or photos that violate the newspaper's rules on accuracy, fairness and objectivity. They're like a "corps of unpaid proofreaders" who believe error-free reporting is an attainable objective.

To maintain the confidentiality of the letters, I shall not mention the names of the writers. But I will give some information about them so you have an idea where they're coming from when they made their comments.

A retired nurse who describes herself as a full-time housewife said she would like the INQUIRER if—

- It just reports the news in a straightforward manner, as the events really happen. "A lot of time, your reporters include or put in their opinion or interpretation of the news."
- There are no more news based on unnamed sources. "Many times, the reporters would cite 'highly placed sources,' 'reliable sources,' etc. If the source does not want to give his or her name, then please don't quote him or her. Otherwise, your report looks like gossip."
- Captions of pictures state only what the picture actually shows. "No speculations, interpretations or opinions on what the people in the picture may be saying or doing."

Positive stories

A teacher of English in a public school in Cagayan de Oro City suggests that the INQUIRER—

- Put up a regular correction column on the front page so the mistakes that appear on the front page are corrected there and not in the inside pages. "Many times you run stories that have not been confirmed and when these stories eventually turn out to be rumors, if not totally untrue, there is never a disclaimer of sorts."
- Feature positive or inspiring stories every day, not just on Sundays. "This will help restore the Filipinos' faith in ourselves. Many of our social and political problems can be solved by a strong sense of nationalism."
- Publish more investigative reports, especially corruption in the media. "It is easy for reporters to write about corruption in government, but the media do not do anything about corruption within their own ranks."

Less editorializing

A veteran foreign journalist who has been covering the Philippines and other Asian countries for many years completed the question posed to him in the following manner—

It stopped trying hard to find "cutesy" leads. "Just tell us the news: what happened, who said what and, of course, what the other side is. Let the readers decide what it means. All too often, the attempt to lure readers in with a convoluted or 'gotcha' first paragraph leads to editorializing."

It covered more international news. "Some days, it is only a single page. We all know how interrelated we all are, quite apart from terrorism."

It weaned itself off from endless columns. "The INQUIRER isn't alone in this, of course. I've never seen a town in which so many papers carried so many columns, most of them are unreadable, inane or incomprehensible. Some of that space might as well be usefully devoted to foreign or other news."

Less sections

An Irish priest who has been living in the country for more than three decades and teaches in a school in the Visayas would be a lot happier with the INQUIRER if—

It has fewer sections on weekends. "Why not put all the 'Lifestyle' sections together or, better still, reduce them? Many of the stories written there are totally irrelevant to the lives of 99.99 percent of Filipinos who are struggling to survive."

It dropped Ramon Tulfo. "His frequent racist remarks are utterly deplorable and irresponsible. His hatred and contempt for Muslims, whether Filipinos or from elsewhere, is 'worthy' of Joseph Goebbels and certainly unworthy of the INQUIRER."

Advocacies

A social activist, who remains optimistic about the Philippines in spite of all the problems we're going through, wants the INQUIRER to—

Help make heads and tails of the disparity in headlines between the print and broadcast media. "Why are there marked differences?"

Give the overseas Filipinos a permanent column. "This is probably the most underrated sector today. Their potential for turning this country around is only waiting to be tapped."

- Allot a section for non-government organizations that have many projects in the front line that need to be shared with the rest of the country. "The column will help disseminate information to the public about the different products of the NGOs. It seems only the big and well-known organizations, like Migrante International, get media coverage."

Conclusion

I have no doubt the readers had the best interests of the INQUIRER in mind when they made the suggestions. Although satisfied with the present state of the newspaper, they believe it is possible to make it more responsive to the needs of the readers and enable it to play a significant role in the development of our country.

I've shared the thoughts of the readers with the management and editorial staff of the newspaper. Many of them are slowly being implemented. Those that are quite "radical" are being studied. But the bottom line is, the readers deserve to be heard because they are the reason for being of the newspaper.

Merry Christmas!

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Why not a moratorium on squatter evictions?

WE have declared a ceasefire with the New People's Army during the Christmas season. Can't we also declare a moratorium on evictions of poor families? They, too, deserve peace at Christmastime.

Large-scale evictions are ongoing in Taguig, Parañaque, Cavite and Quezon City. Thousands of families are involved.

A moratorium on eviction at Christmas will honor the Holy Family who searched in Bethlehem for a place to stay where the Child might be born. They couldn't find one except in a stable. Let's not put our poor on the streets searching for a place to stay this Christmas. To do so mocks all that Christmas stands for.

The moratorium should be on government and private land. Evictions can wait a month.

—ALICIA GENTOLIA MURPHY,
Urban Poor Associates,
25-A Mabuhay St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

Veterinary college took needed precautions

WE would like to point out gross inaccuracies in the article titled, "Killer virus threatens poultry farms" written by Mei Magsino. (PDI, 11/22/03)

An excerpt from the seventh and eighth paragraphs read thus:

"...The country's biggest college of veterinary medicine still allowed an Indonesian graduate student to import an even stronger strain of the virus from Indonesia and Japan."

"The result was an even bigger outbreak that egg producers now fear might wipe out the entire poultry industry in this town, and worse, could spread to the rest of the country."

While the author did not mention the name of the country's biggest college of veterinary medicine, well-informed readers understand that the college alluded to is the UPLB College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) which is undoubtedly No. 1 in the country in terms of staff strength and performance in the veterinary board examinations.

It is true that a CVM faculty member requested import permits from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) for positive isolates, vaccine virus strains and positive hyperimmune sera of the Infectious Laryngotracheitis (ILT) virus. These reagents were meant for laboratory use only and were needed to confirm viral isolates from the outbreak in San Jose, Batangas. BAI issued the veterinary import permits but even before the faculty member was able to use it in the laboratory, her attention was called to the need for a biosafety permit from the UPLB Institutional Biosafety Committee. The faculty member knew that, because of this oversight, the prudent thing to do was to chemically disinfect and autoclave the viral isolates and she undertook these safety measures in due time.

It therefore required a stretch of the author's imagination to conclude that CVM's importation of the virus caused "an even bigger outbreak that egg producers now fear might wipe out the poultry industry in this town..."

The CVM is mandated to study and find solutions to problems that beset the livestock and animal industry in the country and as such would never act irresponsibly as to cause the spread of a virus that will obliterate these industries. In fact, the importation of the Indonesian strain of the virus was a step toward understanding and characterizing the local strain that could fast-track the search for a solution to the problem.

—SALCEDO L. EDUARDO, DVM,
dean and professor,
College of Veterinary Medicine,
University of the Philippines
Los Baños College, Laguna

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Report source was misattributed

THIS is in response to a statement attributed to Energy Secretary Vince Perez (PDI, 11/27/03) in a news report titled, "Perez pushes Panay power project," that "CFB (coal) technology had lower carbon dioxide emissions than even gas turbine-based generators." The article alleged that these figures came from a WWF study.

The opposite is true. The WWF study titled, "Scenarios and Strategies for Clean Power Development in the Philippines," clearly states that carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants, whether CFB or otherwise, are significantly higher than natural gas combined cycle plants.

Pulverized coal emits 726.99 tons CO2/Gwh compared to 441.82 tons CO2/Gwh from natural gas. The WWF study contains no figures for CFB technology. These figures were taken from the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) statistics on carbon dioxide emissions of different power plant types.

WWF-Philippines firmly believes that coal is not the appropriate and logical technology for the Philippines today. CFB technology, erroneously labeled as "clean coal," only reduces SOX and NOX emissions; it does not eliminate carbon dioxide—which is the major greenhouse gas responsible for climate change. The same WWF study establishes that the Philippines has abundant renewable energy resources and the technology to tap these resources is widely available.

—LORY TAN,
president, WWF-Philippines,
LBI Building, 57 Kalayaan Ave.,
Diliman, Quezon City

We must be self-sufficient in rice again

THIS is a reaction to the proposal of International Rice Research economist Dr. David Dawe, that the country is better off importing rice. I think, self-sufficiency in rice production is far more beneficial for us Filipinos in the long run.

First, aspiring for rice self-sufficiency will not deprive our two million rice farmers of their livelihood. In fact, it will secure their long-term livelihood enabling them to be competitive in the world market.

Second, rice self-sufficiency will safeguard our food security. Cheap imported rice is not forever. We cannot rely on other countries for our staple food. Prices of commodities in the world market are subject to contingencies and conditions that are purely beyond our control. Any sudden surges in demand in the world market will surely cause a concomitant increase in rice prices, making our country vulnerable to external impositions. We cannot gamble our food security on the present enticements of the global status quo.

All in all, it is security that should be of paramount concern. And rice self-sufficiency shields national security more than importing rice. What we must do is to improve our rice production capabilities so that our farmers' rice yields may continually compete globally, eventually making the country less dependent on rice imports.

—DODO RA. CAGAS,
3rd Estrada St., Davao del Sur

Little cooperation given to PCA probe

ALLOW us to set the facts straight about Liwayway N. Ylagan's letter ("Slow action on DENR complaint," PDI, 12/10/03) accusing the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of inefficiency in handling her complaint.

Acting on the basis of the contents of her Aug. 18 letter, PCA Oriental Mindoro officer in charge Marcelino Austria instructed two of his agriculturists to conduct an investigation of the alleged illegal coconut cutting perpetrated by the barangay captain of Ibayo, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, on a 37-hectare piece of land she claims she owns.

In a memorandum addressed to Austria dated Aug. 25, the two agriculturists reported that:

1. According to a certain Angie Sadaba, the former administrator of the property and now a barangay council member, the cutting of coconut trees in Ylagan's property was done either upon the instruction of Jeremy Enriquez, the barangay captain of Ibayo and reportedly the present administrator of the land, the municipal mayor who is the brother of Enriquez, or their father who was a former board member of the second district of the province.

2. They failed to conduct an initial investigation as nobody from the area was interested to cooperate and provide information on the incident, hence, the boundaries of the subject property were not determined nor the circumstances established.

On Oct. 3, the undersigned being the regional manager of PCA Mimaropa, sent Ylagan a letter requesting her to accompany our personnel in going to the site for the PCA to be able to conduct the initial investigation.

Taking the letter in a bad light, Ylagan, instead of accompanying our personnel or having someone in her stead accompany our people, wrote the PNP provincial director and said "the PCA has no guts to conduct an ocular inspection of the area" and that the undersigned "deserves to be protected and not just cower in fright by Jeremy Enriquez, a notorious terror and pistol-packing fellow."

On Nov. 24, in reaction to the letter, the undersigned sent PCA Administrator Danilo M. Coronacion a memorandum explaining that his invitation to Ylagan was merely to:

1. Pinpoint the exact area, location and boundaries of the property where the alleged coconut cutting was done.

2. Help the PCA get the right information and witnesses vital to the filing of the criminal charges against the perpetrator/s.

3. Provide assistance to Ylagan in the packaging and filing of the case in court.

Records will show, and Ylagan is welcome to view them, that the PCA is doing everything to help her in her plight and that we at the PCA, fear no one in the performance of our job. Inefficiency is something we cannot accept or tolerate. Despite her slurs on us, we still welcome what little cooperation she can give so that once and for all we can put her misery to rest.

—DENNIS J. CALUB,
Ceso V, regional manager III,
Philippine Coconut Authority-Regions 1-3
and Mimaropa, 4/F R & D Bldg.,
Elliptical Road, Quezon City

Lack of road signs

I WROTE to express my disgust over the inappropriate and discourteous implementation of discipline for pedestrians on Montillano Street near the Alabang public market in Alabng, Muntinlupa City.

On Nov. 19 at about 1:30 p.m., I got off from a bus near that market and walked to get to the other side of Montillano Street. Very few vehicles were passing through that street. I must admit that I was not familiar with that place. Three men wearing black printed shirts approached me and told me that I was guilty of jaywalking. I asked them how this could be since I didn't see any road sign prohibiting pedestrians from crossing the street. Then they pointed out one to me, but it was too far from where I was and all but unnoticeable to pedestrians like me. Two of them made me go to the third floor of the barangay hall for the penalty. They escorted me to the hall as if I were guilty of the most grievous offense and as if I might try to escape.

When I got there, I was surprised that there were many of us "caught" jaywalking. I concluded that many of us did not notice that road sign. Not that we lacked discipline, or we did not observe traffic rules. It was clearly due to the lack of visible and noticeable road signs. The penalty gave three choices for first offenders—P100 fine, one day imprisonment and community service. Lucky for me I still had P100 in my pocket.

To the barangay captain, Victor Ulanday, I am not against disciplining pedestrians but I have these suggestions for him. I suggest that he put visible road signs along that street, put iron bars to prevent pedestrians from crossing that street and tell his ill-mannered men not just to wait for possible victims. His men can do a good job by just leading the pedestrians to the proper lane. We don't lack discipline. We lack sufficient road signs.

—REV. FR. JERRY R. OBLEPIAS,
Bishop's Residence,
San Pablo City, Laguna

More important things to spend on

I WAS going through the Lifestyle section last month. Included were a feature on the new Louis Vuitton shop, particularly the part showing some outfits from Mix. What I found to be in really bad taste was that the prices of individual items were printed next to the photographs of said items, i.e. handbag: P80,000, jeans: P7,000 and so on. For what?

The people who can afford those things already know how much they cost, and the people who can't afford them probably don't know that they cost that much, and don't really need to know, because they have more important things to spend their money on, like food (a pair of those jeans from Mix could take care of the groceries for a couple of weeks), tuition (one of those bags could put my kid through school for a year, with all unseen fees included), etc.

So putting the prices there doesn't really serve a worthy purpose, I think, unless it's your intention to either alienate your middle-class readers, incite a revolution, or prove that it is indeed true that your editorial policies for the Lifestyle section at times place undue emphasis on frivolity, superficiality and materialism.

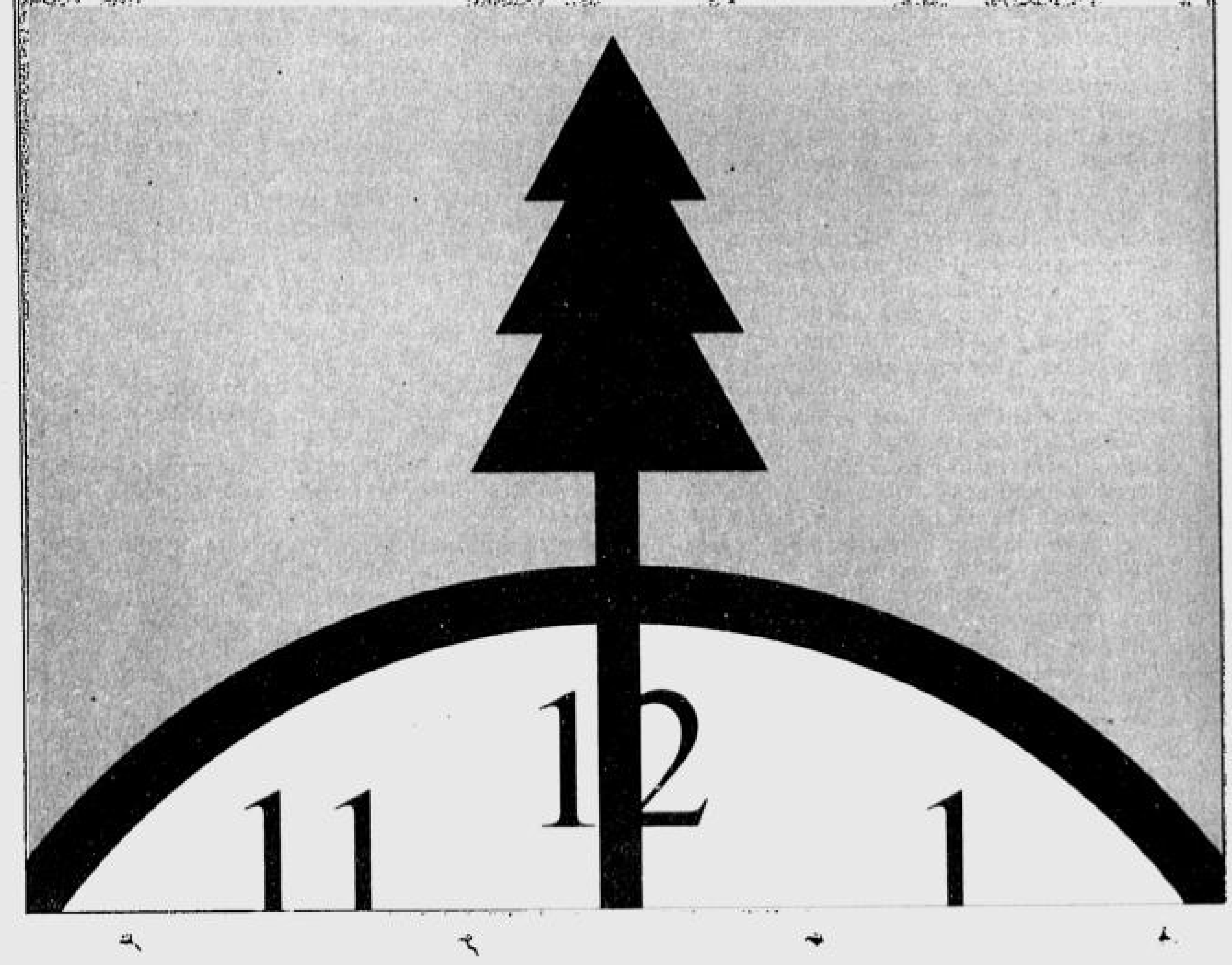
—JOANNA RUIZ,
joannan@info.com.ph

Robinsons extends its shopping hours 'til 12 midnight on Dec. 23

Participating Malls: Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Place Novaliches, Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Big R Supercenter Cainta Junction, Robinsons Place Imus

Participating Department Stores: Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa, Lipa, Dasmariñas, Cebu, Bacolod, Iloilo, Robinsons Townmall Los Baños, Metropolis Star Alabang, Starmall Shaw, Tutuban Center, Waltermart Gen. Trias, Waltermart Sta. Rosa, Waltermart Plaridel and Nepo Mall Pampanga

Robinsons Department Store
ROBINSONS Malls



MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2003
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A17

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Voters urged: Don't ask favors from pols

"*WALANG hihingi* (No asking)." No, it is not about beggars asking for alms. But it is a call from a corruption watch group to discourage Filipinos from asking "favors in kind or in cash" during the election period.

As election time is starting to heat up and candidates may soon hit the campaign trail, Father Alberto Alejo, head of the Mindanawon Office of the Ateneo de Davao University, said now is the time to pose a challenge to every sector to resist seeking solicitations from candidates.

Alejo, who is also leading Ehem—an anti-corruption campaign, said he has considered buying votes as part of the political culture of the Filipinos. And this "cultural habit" continues to corrupt the people, he said.

"We are not only here to investigate (corruption) but we should also help in the promotion and dissemination of discernment in communicating commitment," Alejo told the media participants at the recent workshop on Media and Local Governance Corruption and Access to Information sponsored by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility at the Waterfront Insular Hotel.

Alejo said his group was poised to start the "*Walang hihingi*" campaign with the help of the media. He said this campaign might reduce a lot of expenses especially from poor candidates.

"We should not ask favors from any candidate. We should reclaim dignity and vote for candidates with integrity," Alejo said.

It was time to call on all parishes not to ask for money from candidates or politicians for altar repairs of chapels, candles and processions; for youth groups not to ask for sports uniforms in order not to be beholden to the politicians; for schools not to ask for repairs of gates or fences; and the neighborhood not to ask for new roads, he said.

The media also has a responsibility to play its part in helping the people decide who they should choose to lead the country, he said.

He pointed out that media should also promote transformation because media is also a public trust.

Alejo stressed that corruption is not only in government but also in society. He said it not only hurts the poor but also creates conflict.

It is time for cultural transformation of every Filipino, he said. *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 Maguindanao 'royal' women to contest congressional seat

COTABATO CITY—Two women belonging to Maguindanao's royal clans would be facing each other in what observers described as a tough one-on-one contest for the province's second district congressional seat.

"I am convinced that a representative and a mayor tandem serving as public servants would mean development in its real sense," Bai Sandra, wife of Mayor Muslimin Sema, said in describing her decision to run.

Ms Sema belongs to the influential Ampatuan and Sinsuat clans while her would-be opponent, Bai Sendig Dilangalen, belongs to the Lidasan clan.

Bai Sendig is wife of incumbent Rep. Didagen Dilangalen.

With the decision of the two, it would be the first for Maguindanao to witness a congressional election pitting women against each other.

Traditionally, men have monopolized the province's congressional representation.

Muslim political leaders in Maguindanao, who belonged to the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, were instrumental in Ms Sema's decision to run, according to her political adviser Lito Coloso.

Coloso said among them were Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan, Lakas provincial chair, Mayor Tocao Mastura of Sultan Kudarat town, Lakas chair in the first district, and Maguindanao Vice Gov. Bimbo Sinsuat.

"The endorsement by Lakas stalwarts and the support given me by village chairmen and nongovernment organizations validated the support of simple folks for me to continue my services," Ms Sema, former education secretary of the Autonomous Region, told the INQUIRER in a separate interview.

Ms Dilangalen, meanwhile, said she would work hard like her husband did.

Rep. Dilangalen is eyeing a Senate seat under the United Opposition.

"I would (even) surpass the achievement of my husband," she said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Owners' barricade Antique airport tarmac

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The family of a landowner claiming ownership of a lot occupied by the Antique airport briefly barricaded the airport tarmac yesterday to demand payment from the Air Transportation Office (ATO).

Ruben Collado and 15 of his relatives put up a billboard on the tarmac of the Evelio B. Javier Airport and stayed on the runway for three hours demanding P7 million payment from the ATO. He later agreed to remove the billboard and leave the runway after Mayor Fernando Corvera of the capital town of San Jose assured him that ATO officials from Manila would be coming today to discuss the problem.

The protest did not affect airport operations because there was no scheduled flight yesterday. Supt. Ronilo Quebrar, Antique police director, said the protest did not pose "imminent danger," but he urged the parties involved to resolve the problem peacefully.

The controversy could, however, affect the flights starting today at the peak of the holiday season. Asian Spirit, the sole airline operating in the Antique-Manila route, has a single flight daily except on Sunday and Thursday.

Collado along with his cousins and nephews started their protest at around 9 a.m. on the runway about 500 meters from the terminal. They brought umbrellas and sat on the tarmac beside the billboard.

The billboard, measuring three meters wide and eight meters tall, read: "Private property. No trespassing." Also written were the lot number and the tax certificate number to prove his ownership claim.

Collado, who acts as the administrator of the family-owned lot in Barangay Funda-Dalipe in San Jose, said his family has not been paid for the 21,347-square meter-lot that has been used as part of the airport for 47 years.

He said in a telephone interview that he was frustrated because ATO officials have been promising him payment when he shows proof to back up his ownership claim. He said several other landowners own parcels of land occupied by the airport but lacked documents.

Martin Terre, acting airport manager, said the ATO legal division was processing the claim.

In April, Collado and other landowners also barricaded the runway but were convinced by ATO officials to stop their protest action.

The airport was reopened on March 28 after being closed for more than 20 years. The airport underwent a year-long renovation, using a P40-million fund from President Macapagal-Arroyo's social fund.

It has a runway 1,200 meters in length and 30 meters wide on a 25-hectare area, bigger than the airports in Caticlan in Malay town, Aklan and Roxas City in Capiz.

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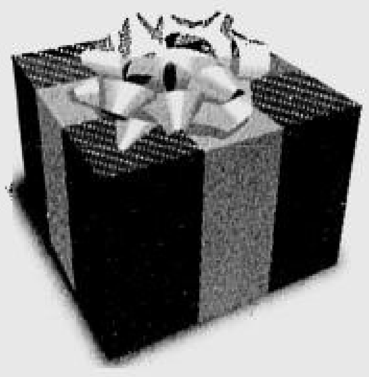
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NORTHERN METRO
8th Avenue - Grace Park

EASTERN METRO
New Sta Lucia East - Cainta
Robinson's Metro East
SM City - Fairview
SM City - North Edsa

WESTERN METRO
A. Linao - Paco
Central Market - V. Fugoso

CENTRAL METRO
Greenhills Shopping Center
Pioneer Highlands - Madison

SOUTHERN METRO
NAIA 1
Manuela Metropolis - Alabang
Redemptorist Road - Baclaran

MAKATI
Makati Cinema Square

NORTHERN LUZON
Abanao Square Mall - Baguio
Alaminos - Pangasinan
Balintawak St. - Laoag
Bonifacio St. - Tuguegarao
Fernandez - Dagupan City
San Fernando - La Union
Santiago - Isabela

CENTRAL LUZON
Congress - Malolos
Dolores - San Fernando
Maharlika Road - Cabanatuan City
Nepo Mart - Angeles City
Puregold - Clarkfield
Times Square - Subic

SOUTHERN LUZON
A. Mabini - Biñan
Daraga - Rizal St.
Gen Luna - Naga
Lipa - Rotonda
North - Calamba Crossing
P. Burgos - Batangas City
Quezon Ave. - Lucena
Sta. Rosa - South Express

VISAYAS
F. Gonzales - Cebu City
Gorondo - Cebu City
North - Mandaue
Iznart - Iloilo
Salazar - Tacloban
Goldenfield - Bacolod

MINDANAO
C M Recto - Davao City
Lapasan - Cagayan de Oro
Santiago St. - General Santos
Sta. Ana - Davao City

BRANCHES OPEN ON JANUARY 2, 2004

NORTHERN METRO
Lapu-Lapu - Northbay
Marulas - McArthur

EASTERN METRO
Aurora Blvd. - Annapolis
Marikina - JP Rizal
Sixto Antonio - Pasig

WESTERN METRO
C. Palanca - Quiapo
M. de Santos - Ilaya

CENTRAL METRO
Ortigas Avenue - Greenhills
Robinson's Galleria - Ortigas

SOUTHERN METRO
NAIA 1
Manuela Metropolis - Alabang
Redemptorist Road - Baclaran

MAKATI
MC Home Depot - Fort Bonifacio

NORTHERN LUZON
Alexander - Urdaneta
Castro - Laoag
Cauayan - Isabela
Perez - Dagupan City
Session Road - Baguio

CENTRAL LUZON
Centennial - Clarkfield
Miranda - Angeles City
Olongapo - Rizal Avenue
Plaridel - Bulacan
San Agustin - San Fernando
Sanciangco - Cabanatuan

SOUTHERN LUZON
Caceres - Naga
C M Recto - Lipa
Enriquez - Lucena
Kumintang - Batangas
Pacita - San Pedro
Rizal St. - Legaspi
Waltermart - Sta. Rosa
Waltermart - Calamba

VISAYAS
Borromeo - Cebu City
Osmena Blvd - Cebu City
South - Mandaue
Valeria - Iloilo
Burgos - Ormoc
Araneta - Bacolod
Colon - Dumaguete

MINDANAO
Pendatun - Gen. Santos
R. Alunan - Koronadal
R. Magsaysay Ave - Davao City
San Pedro - Davao City
Vamenta - Cagayan de Oro
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Dumaguete's best-lit Christmas house awes visitors

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Hop into any tricycle here and ask the driver to take you to the home of Doctor Rico Absin and you may be greeted with a puzzled look.

But tell the driver to take you to the best-lit house in Dumaguete this Christmas season and no doubt, he will take you to Absin's house in Barangay Piapi.

What started 15 years ago as a bold and romantic idea has become an institution in this city.

"Back then, people thought I was crazy for putting my decorations outside of my home, but they have also caught on with the fancy," mused Absin, an anesthesiologist in his 50s.

The much-photographed and filmed house, whose sprawling lawn also glitters with all kinds of Christmas lights, has been featured each year in newspaper articles, television programs and coffee table books.

Yet, the house continues to leave even regular visitors in awe.

"I've been going to this house every year for the last ten years now, and each time is a new experience for me," said a woman who gave her name as Joy.

Visitors never fail to be amazed at the many Christmas trees, which adorn every part of the Absin home to include his bedroom, each with a different motif.

On one corner is Absin's antique collection while the stairway to his bedroom is dotted with stuffed toys and dolls, making it a favorite place for children to have their pictures taken.

Visitors, who come by every year, will not notice much change this year, except for a collection of Chinese musical dolls that occupy one area near the dining room.

Christmas for Absin begins in September when he starts putting his materials together. He gathers paper mache from Paete in Laguna and pairs them with decors from the United States and other parts of the country bought by him or through friends.

"The people of Dumaguete are always waiting for this. They keep on coming back, which has also kept me going these past 15 years," Absin said.

As chair of the Dumaguete City Tourism Council, Absin also lit up the Rizal Boulevard, the bell tower and other areas frequented by tourists.

"We have more lighted places in Dumaguete than perhaps in other towns or cities and so we want the visitors to keep coming, especially during Christmas. We have lighted up the boulevard, the bell tower and other places of interest in the city," he said.

Last Monday, Absin held a P500-per plate dinner for a cause in his house, which featured a concert by the renowned singing group Ating Pamana.

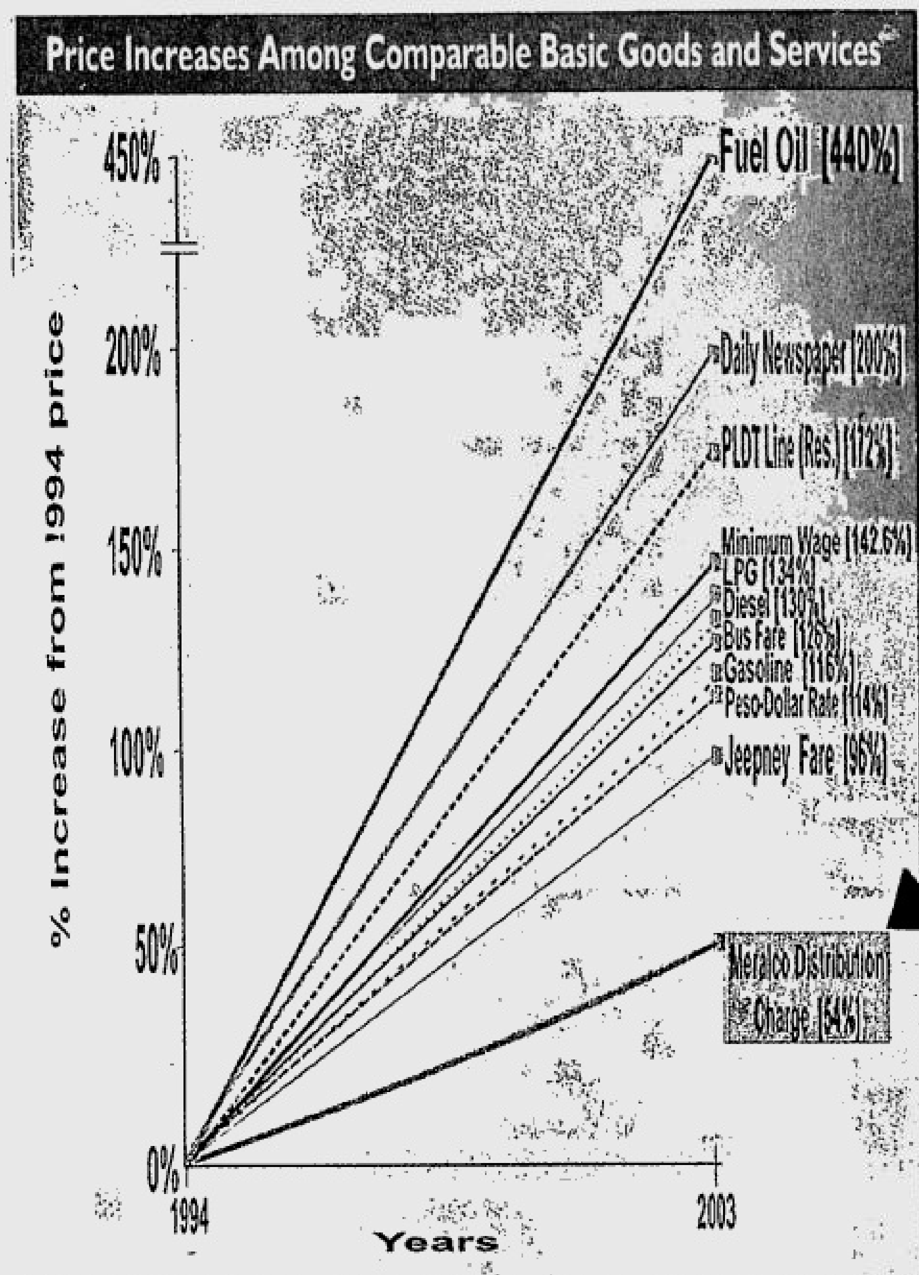
About P150,000 was raised, which Absin would share to the less fortunate children who usually flocked to his home on Christmas Day.

"Children from depressed communities usually come to visit me on Christmas Day and I want to give them a good breakfast. This year, I hope they can get more than just breakfast," Absin enthused.

The activity was put together with the help of Absin's friends, movie stars Marvin Agustin, Anton Bernardo, Chris Martinez and Piolo Pascual.

THIS HOUSE in Dumaguete continues to attract visitors during the Christmas holidays. ALEX PAL

Understanding Meralco's 12-centavo Adjustment



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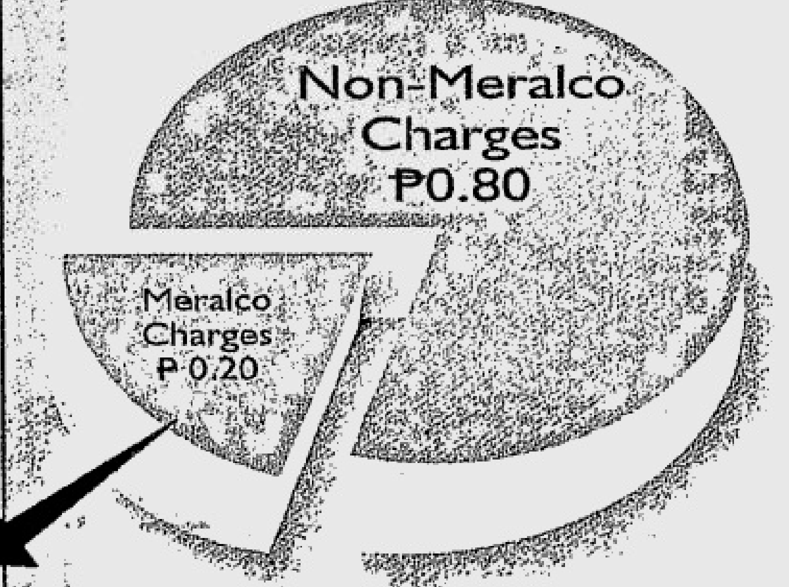

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A Modest Rate Increase. This 12-centavo adjustment is only 2% of the average power rate to the end consumers of P5.99 per kwh. For almost 2.7 million households, this will mean an adjustment in their monthly electric bill of only 7 to 40 pesos.

A Little Goes a Long, Long Way. These increases are only equivalent to a pack of cigarettes, 3 bottles of beer, or less than half a day's worth of text messages. But the additional revenue from this modest rate increase will go a long way in ensuring reliable electric service for all of us - to our homes, schools, hospitals, and industry.

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Meralco is keenly aware of the role that a reliable power distributor plays in support of the economy, attracting investments and thus creating jobs for our people. This is a proven commitment manifested over 100 years of dedicated service to the Filipino nation.

We seek your understanding and support for the rate adjustment of P0.12 per kwh.

"Meralco is keenly aware of the role that a reliable power distributor plays in support of the economy, attracting investments and thus creating jobs for our people."

-Manuel M. Lopez
Chairman & CEO

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8 Laguna parishes hold dawn Masses in darkness

PANGIL, Laguna—At least eight parishes in five Laguna towns celebrated dawn Masses yesterday amid about 10-hour power interruption in Laguna.

Affected by the power outage, which started at about 11 p.m., Saturday, were those in Kalayaan, Paete, Pangil, Pakil and Lumban.

In the Kalayaan and Pangil parishes, the dawn Masses were celebrated with people holding lighted candles and priests delivering homilies without microphones.

The generator units of these parishes were either not available or not in order for the unexpected prolonged power cutoff. At least in the Pangil parish, Mass attendance was greatly reduced.

SPO2 Lito Fresco of the Laguna Provincial Police Investigation Office, ruled out sabotage by criminal elements. Power was restored only at about 10:15 a.m. yesterday. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

2 Koreans nabbed

ANGELES CITY—Two South Korean men were arrested in a hotel here on Dec. 12 for allegedly abducting a fellow South Korean in Tayug, Pangasinan. Police detained Yun Ki Young and Lee Sang Jin, both 54, after Jovelyn Ancheta, who presented herself as the live-in partner of the supposed victim, Ki Choul Yoon, 56, sought their help to arrest the suspects. Ancheta, citing the accounts of her relatives in Tayug, said the suspects forcibly took Ki on Friday afternoon. Yun and Lee, according to her, were helped by three men claiming to be National Bureau of Investigation agents. She claimed that the three Koreans, all from Seoul, were involved in treasure hunting ventures and could have fought over a bungled deal. Senior Supt. Jaime Restua, Angeles police chief, said Ki was released in Angeles City at around 7 p.m., more than five hours after he was abducted in Pangasinan. Yun denied kidnapping Ki. Yun said he and Lee were in the export and import business and were not engaged in gold or treasure hunting activities. *Tonette Orejas and Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

3 fires raze properties

BAGUIO CITY—More than P500,000 worth of property were destroyed by fire in three separate incidents here last week. Police said a house on Tacay Road was burned on Dec. 15 after a lighted candle was left unattended in one of the house's rooms. Earlier that day, another fire destroyed about P300,000 worth of goods in at least four used-clothes stalls on Kayang Street. On Dec. 13, another fire hit an apartment unit in Trancoville District, destroying at least P150,000 worth of property. Senior Fire Officer 1 Arnol Olyem, shift investigator of the Baguio Fire Department, said no one was hurt in the three incidents. On Dec. 11, eight people were killed after a fire hit the Perutz Nightclub on Magsaysay Avenue here. *Layna Francisco and Nina Mendizabal, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bulacan gov't cited

CITY OF MALOLOS—The provincial government of Bulacan was cited in the recent Gawad Galing Pook Awards for "continuing excellence" in the implementation of projects that benefit Bulakeños. Gov. Josefina de la Cruz received the Award for Continuing Excellence (Ace) from President Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 8. De la Cruz said this year's award was based on the province's institutionalization of a "culture of excellence" in the implementation of the previous Gawad Galing Pook winning entries despite a change in leadership. Bulacan was cited along with Marikina City, Naga City and Nueva Vizcaya. The Bulacan government's Panlalawigang Komisyon para sa Kababaihan ng Bulakan was also cited as one of the 10 most outstanding programs in the country.
Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Seminarians' reunion

FORMER students and graduates of the San Pablo Diocesan Seminary (now St. Peter College Seminary) in Schetelig Avenue, San Pablo City, Laguna will have a Grand Alumni Homecoming Fellowship on Dec. 26 at the seminary grounds. A Eucharistic Celebration will be held at 4 p.m. with former seminary formators that include Msgr. Jerry Bitoon and Msgr. Mario Castillo, presiding. Dinner and fellowship will then follow at 6 p.m. For details, contact Felmore Valles at 09197476139 or Rigelle Fenandez at 09162349557.

Alert raised as alleged bomber seen in Zambo City

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The alert level has been raised all over the city following a military report that the leader of the October 2002 bombing that killed at least nine persons here has been spotted in the east coast last week.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko said Amilhamja Ajilul was seen in Curuan District in the company of several other Abu Sayyaf leaders including commander Tutulungan and Burhan Mundos.

Mundos was identified as responsible in the Fitmart explosion in General Santos City also in October 2002.

Kyamko said Ajilul, also a ranking Abu Sayyaf commander, and the two other bandit leaders were seen with about 50 fully armed followers.

"They were planning to stage highway robbery and hold-up commuters passing the Zamboanga City-Vitali route," Kyamko said citing intelligence reports.

He said the military has deployed a contingent to run after the suspects.

Supt. Mario Yanga, city police director, said they also deployed additional forces to thwart any attempts by the Abu Sayyaf to sow violence in the city.

"All major and vital installations are properly secured, we even dispatched several forces inside and outside shopping centers," Yanga said.

Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat said the raising of the alert level should not alarm visitors to the city.

She said with the presence of security forces, trouble-makers were probably already thinking twice.

"Their presence will send signals to terrorists and trouble-makers that we are on alert, and I don't think the presence of soldiers will dampen the Christmas spirit," Lobregat said. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mineral for anti-SARS masks found in Tarlac

MAYANTOC, Tarlac—Government geologists reported the discovery here of an abundant supply of zeolites, a mineral used in the production of surgical masks.

The demand for which masks may rise with the possible resurgence of the killer virus Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The non-metallic mineral can absorb ions and molecules and, as such, can be used as a chemical sieve, for toxin removal and odor control, said geologist Nelson Quiwa of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Central Luzon.

Quiwa led the MGB team delineating the zeolite-rich site here. Initially, contiguous and huge boulders of the mineral were found in the upland village of Gayong-Gayong. The site possibly extends four kilometers down to Mangatarem, Pangasinan.

The site could help assure enough supply of the mineral to the companies that use synthetic zeolites, he said.

Top-of-the-line masks ran out during the SARS crisis that occurred in Southeast Asian countries early this year, he added.

The zeolites, a volcanic product, were found north of Mt. Pinatubo that straddles the Luzon western arc, more known as the Zambales mountain range.

Arnulfo Cabantog, MGB regional director, said Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun had prepared a recommendation to President Macapagal-Arroyo to declare the site a mineral reservation.

This was the first discovery of zeolites in Central Luzon, Cabantog said.

This could also be the fourth mineral reservation in the region. The first was the marble deposits in Biak na Bato in San Miguel, Bulacan. The second was the chromium site in Coto, Masinloc in Zambales. The third, and which has yet to be declared, is the feldspar deposit in Laur, Nueva Ecija.

Barangay Capt. Melchor Batara, a former forest guard of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and his wife Virginia, a provincial environment employee, gave the lead to the MGB project team.

The couple, with permission from the Tarlac provincial government, began the quarrying of what residents called "pila."

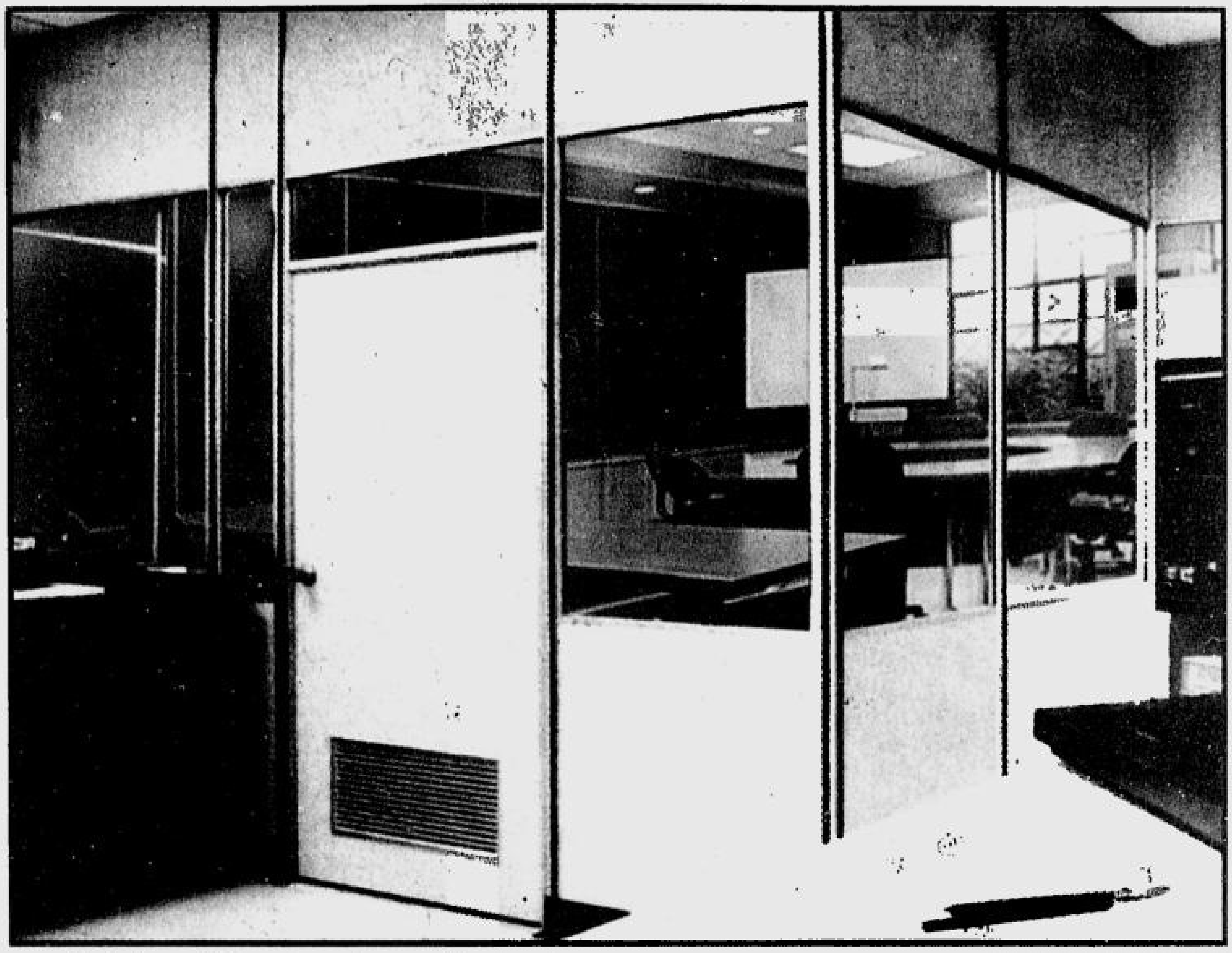
Creamy white in color and hard, blocks of zeolites are exposed in minimal quantities along a stream in the village.

The couple delivers the zeolites at P1 per kilo to a feed miller in Bulacan. The zeolites, crushed into powdery form, are mixed with chicken feeds.

"We were told that zeolites improve the digestive capacity of the poultry and reduce the stink of chicken feces," the couple said.

Cabantog said the inventory of small-scale mining operations and minerals in the region began last year. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Demountable Wall. Dynamism in Space.



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December 20 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
20th Ave.-P. Tuazon
Araneta Center

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Ortigas-Robinsons Galleria

10:30 AM to 4:30 PM
New Divisoria Market

12:00 NN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center

December 24 (Wed)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Farmers Plaza

December 26 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
EDSA-Cubao Aurora
El Cano
Head Office
Honorio Lopez Blvd.-Balut
North Bay Boulevard
Quiapo
Redemptorist-Baclaran
Sta. Monica-Novaliches
Sto. Cristo
Sto. Cristo-San Nicolas
Susano Rd.-Novaliches

12:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Ortigas-San Miguel Ave.

December 27 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
New Divisoria Market

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Ortigas-Robinsons Galleria

January 2 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
EDSA-Cubao Aurora
Head Office
Quiapo
Tutuban Centermall II

12:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Ortigas-San Miguel Ave.

January 3 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Divisoria Center
McArthur Highway-Malinta

LUZON

December 20 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Baguio-Bonifacio
Bauan, Batangas
Calamba-Parian
Carmen, Pangasinan
Ilagan
La Union-Main
Legaspi-Mabini
Lucena-Main
San Pablo-Regidor
Santiago-City Road
Tayug-Pangasinan
Urdaneta-Pangasinan

December 24 (Wed)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Apalit
Nasugbu, Batangas
Rosario, Batangas

December 26 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Legazpi-Rizal
Tabaco

December 27 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Agoo, La Union
Baguio-Cariño
Baguio-Magsaysay
Baguio-Session
Balanga, Bataan
Balayan, Batangas
Bangued, Abra
Batac, Ilocos Norte
Benguet-La Trinidad
Calamba-Real
Calapan
Candon
Cauayan
Dagupan-Fernandez
Dagupan-Perez
Iriga, Camarines Sur
La Union-M.L. Quezon
Laoag-Gen. Segundo
Laoag-Rizal
Lipa-Ayala
Lucena-Red V
Marilao-Bulacan
Occidental Mindoro
Olongapo
Santiago-Main
Solano
Tuguegarao-Luna
Vigan

December 28 (Sun)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Tanauan

December 31 (Wed)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Dagupan-Main
San Carlos-Pangasinan
San Pablo-Maharlika

January 2 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Batangas-Main
Batangas-Kumintang Ilaya
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Guagua
Hagonoy, Bulacan
Iba, Zambales
Naga-Gen. Luna
Occidental Mindoro
Palawan
San Miguel, Bulacan
Tanauan

January 3 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Aparri
Baguio-Magsaysay
Cauayan
Lemery, Batangas
Lipa-B. Morada
Tabaco
Vigan

VISAYAS

December 26 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Ormoc

December 27 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Antique
Cebu-Lincoln
Iloilo-Delgado
Roxas

January 2 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Bacolod-Araneta
Bacolod-Capitol
Bacolod-Gatuslao
Bacolod-Gonzaga
Bacolod-Lacson
Bacolod-Libertad
Bacolod-North Drive
Bacolod-Singcang
Cebu-Tabunok
Ormoc
Silay

January 3 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Bacolod-Sixth
Cebu-Downtown Center
Cebu-Lincoln
Cebu-Taboan

January 4 (Sun)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Roxas-Burgos

MINDANAO

December 26 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Cagayan de Oro-Main

December 27 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Dipolog-Gen. Luna
Pagadian-Rizal
Pagadian-Sta. Lucia
Zamboanga-Brillantes
Zamboanga-Galleria
Zamboanga-Gov. Lim
Zamboanga-Jaldon
Zamboanga-Veterans

January 2 (Fri)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Cagayan de Oro - Main
Davao-Agdao
Davao-Bajada
Davao-Bankerohan
Davao-Buhangin
Davao-Center
Davao-Doctors
Davao-Ecoland
Davao-Matina
Davao-Monteverde
Davao-Panabo
Davao-R. Castillo
Davao-Rizal
Davao-Roxas
Davao-San Pedro
Davao-Sta. Ana
Davao-Tagum
Davao-Toril
Digos
Gen. Santos-Makar
Gen. Santos-P. Acharon
Gen. Santos-Pioneer
Gen. Santos-Santiago Blvd.

January 3 (Sat)

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Basilan
Dipolog-Gen. Luna
Ozamis-Burgos
Ozamis-Rizal
Pagadian-Rizal
Pagadian-Sta. Lucia
Zamboanga-Brillantes
Zamboanga-Galleria
Zamboanga-Gov. Lim
Zamboanga-Jaldon
Zamboanga-Veterans

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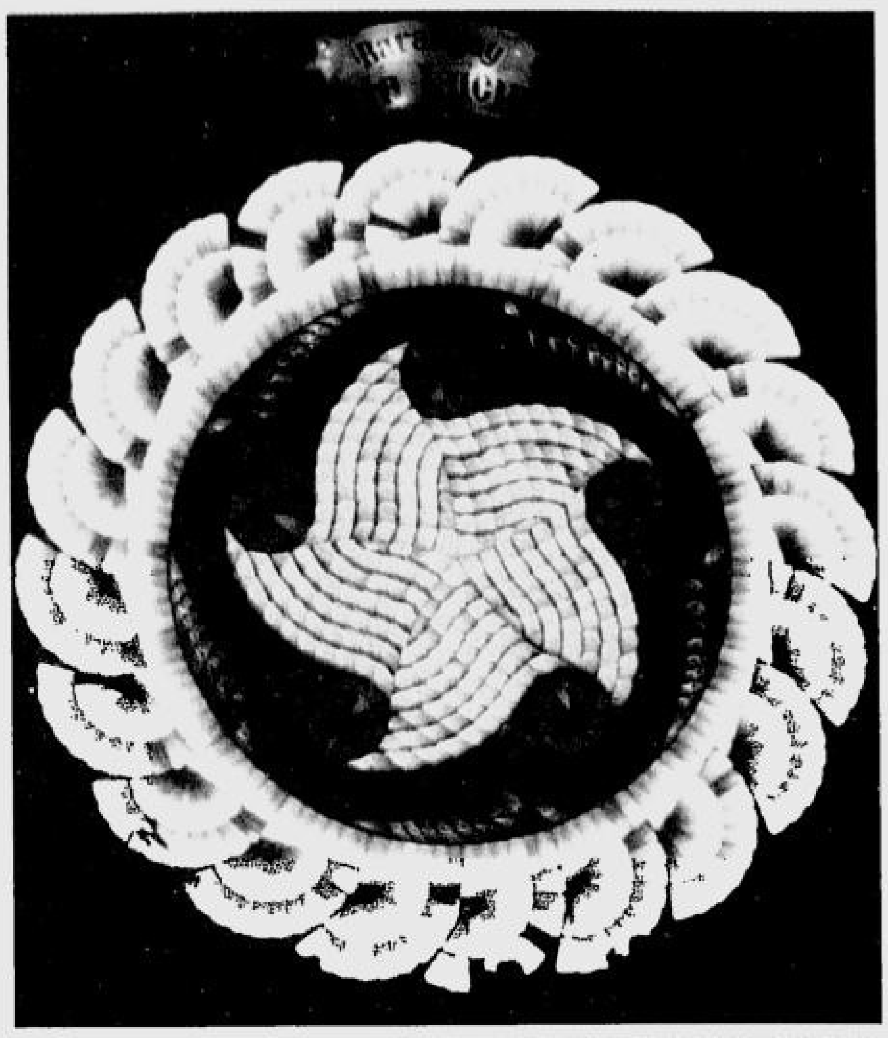
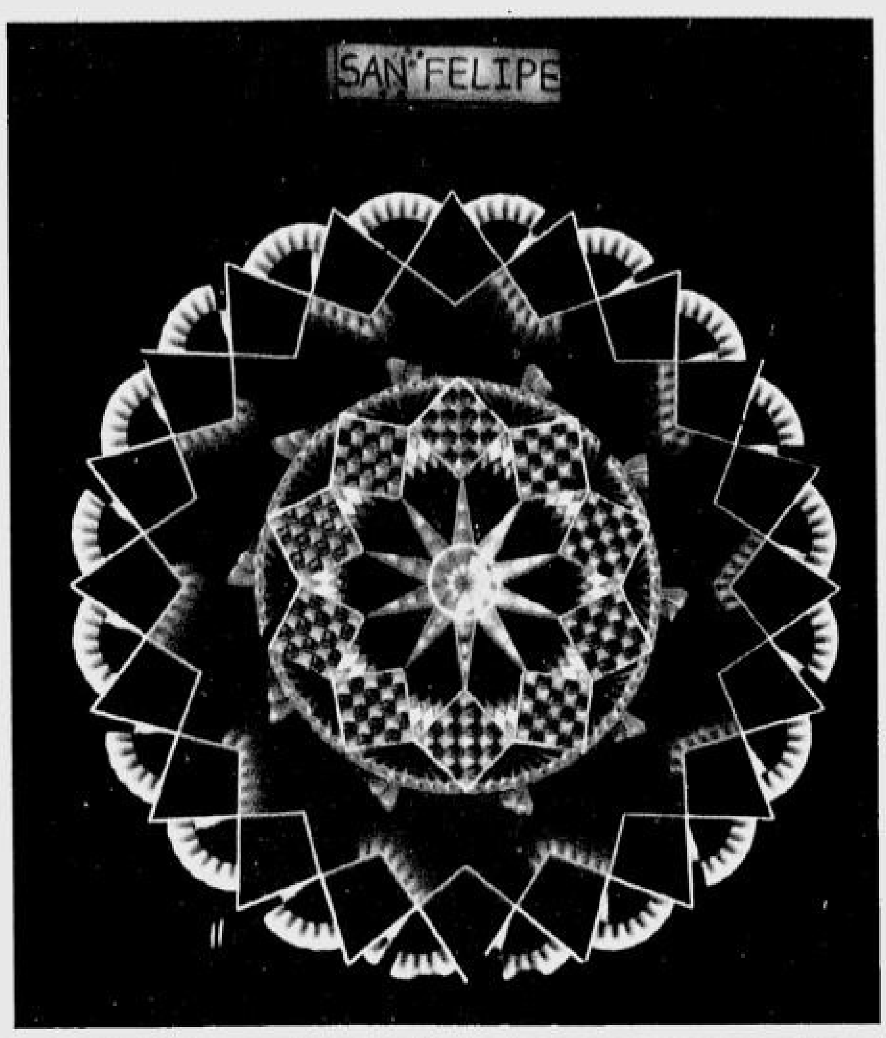
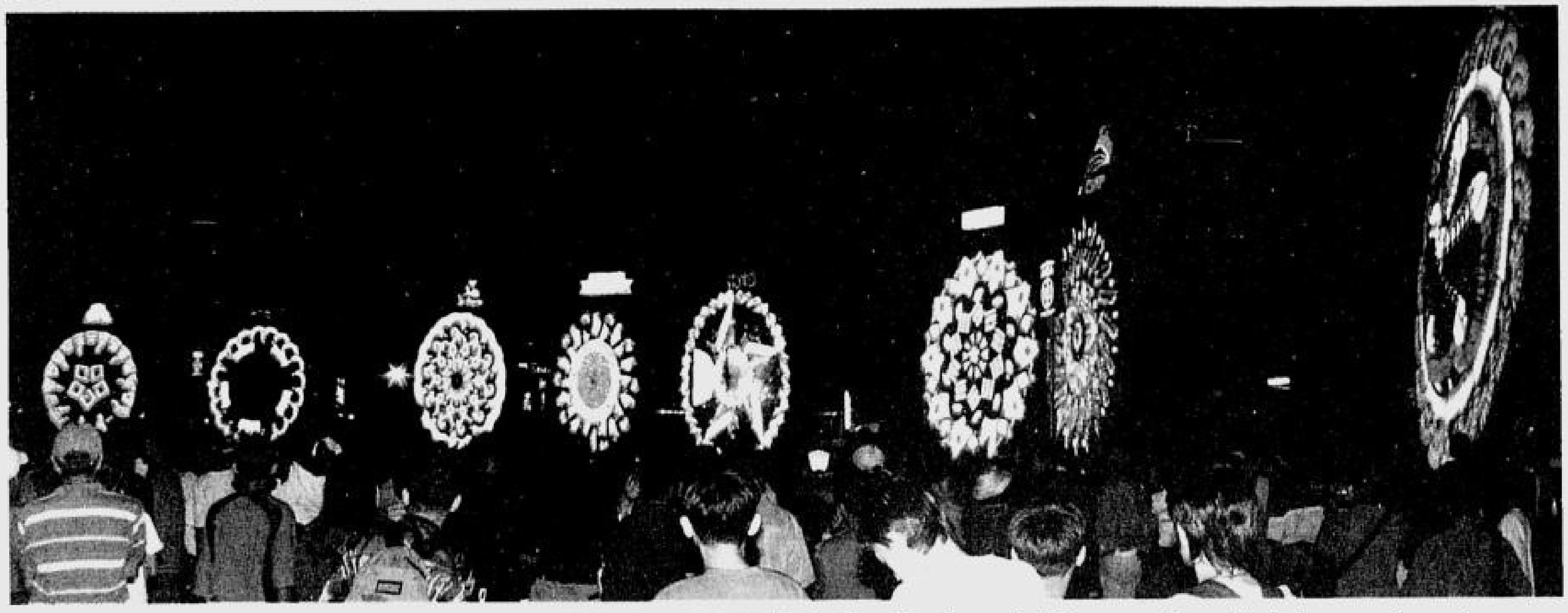






RESIDENTS watch the giant lanterns participating in the "Ligligan Parol" Festival in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga. Two of the lanterns are shown above, representing Barangays Santa Lucia and San Felipe.

PHOTOS BY ARLAN NAEG

Giant lanterns star in Pampanga fest

From page A1

work of this city's craftsmen to be displayed in the annual event that traces its roots to 1908 and the religious folk art of lantern-making.

Time and labor

Parents and grandparents among the spectators carried the younger children on their shoulders and arms. Some sat on footstools, ladders and chairs.

The giant lanterns are unique because of the unbelievable amounts of time, patience, labor, creativity and ingenuity that the craftsmen invest in every creation.

A lantern's huge frame, for instance, is made of steel bars welded together according to the chosen lighting pattern. This year's lanterns were fitted with between 4,700 and 7,200 bulbs, attached to about 2,000 meters of electric wire.

Designed with 30 or so patterns, each lantern is covered with colorful plastic sheets.

But the magic of the lanterns actually starts with the rotor—a circular aluminum barrel with a wheel driven like a car.

Unknown by many in the audience, the rotor operator dance with the music to get the precise tempo, to swerve the wheel and to make the bulbs light up to the exact beat of the music.

The entry of San Felipe bested all for its design, interplay of lights and visual impact. It even had "WOW (Wealth of Wonders) Philippines," the rallying cry of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, on it.

The 10 judges were led by former Pangasinan Gov. Oscar Orbos and Hans Sy of SM Prime Holdings.

It's blue Christmas for this Santa Claus

From page A1

aka Santa Claus in this Pampanga city the last two years, does not have enough goodies on his sleigh. The reason: not enough Santa gigs to raise the money to buy the gifts with.

But the lack of gifts did not stop Fetters from making the rounds in the charity pediatric ward of the Jose B. Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital on Wednesday, distributing packs of candies and toys to at least 70 sick children.

Ofelia, his Filipino wife, said Fetters bought the goods using his monthly pension and the money he earned from doing Santa stints.

"He wanted to do gift-giving to as many poor, ailing children. The gift-giving and his impersonation of Santa are his way of spreading the joy of Christmas, especially to the less fortunate," Ofelia said of her husband's once-a-year act.

Family week

Fetters, 66, has a close resemblance to the Christmas character. At 260 pounds, he's as big as Santa. He has grown his white beard long. Of course, he dons a shiny red suit, complete with a red cap that is his own. And his "Ho! Ho! Ho!," in his old and husky voice, sounds just right.

Fetters began playing Santa in September last year, when the Mormons celebrated National Family Week at the Export Processing Zone Authority (Epza) resettlement area in Angeles City.

He has lived in this city since 1991 after the Subic Naval Base in nearby Zambales, where he worked at the civil service department, closed in November that year.

After the children asked him to return, he said he decided to do Santa again.

He went back in December last year, spreading joy to more than 500 children in the resettlement built for families displaced by the 1991 eruptions of Mt. Pinatubo.

At the hospital, he sat beside the ailing children who, just seeing him in his Santa get-up, smiled, shouted and clapped with joy.

Many looked at him with amazement, perhaps wondering if he was a real Santa. He lingered with Erwin Sarmiento, who is confined for daily dialysis.

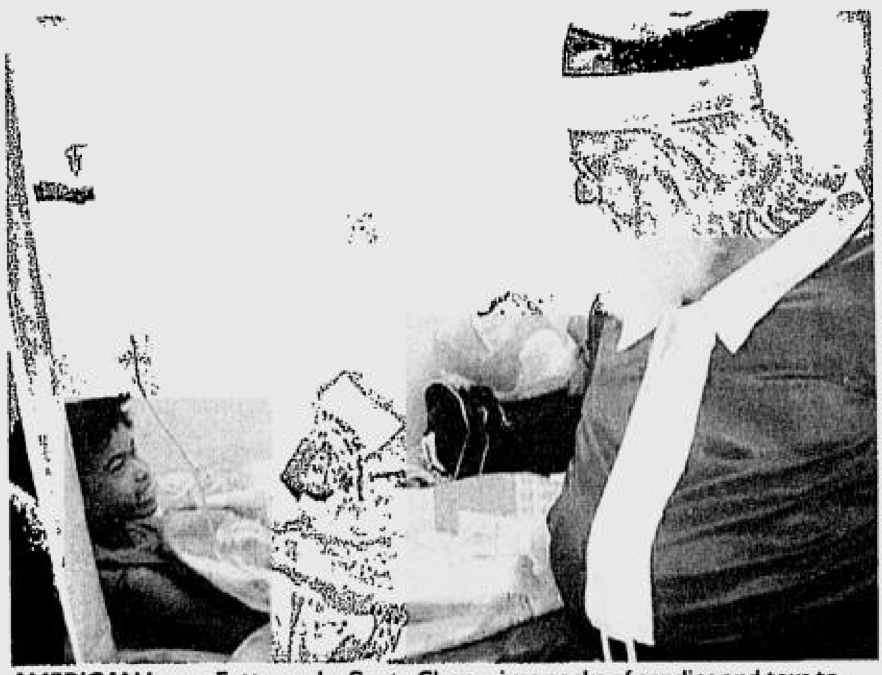
The 13-year-old boy, thin and weak by now, sat up to chat with what he called the only Santa he had seen in his life.

"Pray for me that I get well soon," said the boy.

"Sure will," Fetters promised, before handing a bag of goodies to a younger girl.

But Fetters himself tires easily now. "I'm too old, but I'll do this where my legs could take me," he said, laughing heartily.

"Christmas is really for children," he said.



AMERICAN James Fetters, aka Santa Claus, gives packs of candies and toys to Erwin Sarmiento and other sick children at the Jose B. Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital in the City of San Fernando.

TONETTE T. OREJAS/PDI CENTRAL LUZON DESK

Loren: Let FPJ break the news

From page A1

ty together.

On Thursday, a ranking opposition leader said Poe had decided to make Legarda, who resigned from the ruling Lakas-CMD party, his running mate.

"He himself made the choice two days ago [Dec. 16]," the leader who did not want to be named said then. Legarda had accepted the offer, added the politician, who is closely identified with Poe's bid as standard-bearer of the united opposition.

Legarda, one of 10 senators who voted to open the second Jose Velarde envelope in the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada, also said she was not opposed to granting amnesty to the ousted leader, a close friend of Poe's.

"*Kailangan pag-usapan 'yon* (That requires discussion). I think *kailangan magkaroon na ng* (we now need) compassion and unity," she said.

She said she hoped the Sandiganbayan would grant Estrada's request for a Christmas furlough. She had recently paid Estrada a visit at his detention center in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

Loren's meeting

Legarda appeared surprised when the INQUIRER asked her about the meeting.

"I had a meeting but not with Mr. Poe," she said after greeting the 70 or so remaining guests.

"*Basta may meeting ako kanina* (I had a meeting earlier). I'm not at liberty to divulge it now, I'm sorry. *Pero magandang pag-uusap* (But the meeting went well)," she added.

She said she was leaving it up to Poe to make the announcement.

"*Malapit na po. Maghintay na lang po kayo* (The time is near, you won't have to wait much longer)," she said pleasantly, stressing the word "*po*," a play on Poe's name.

Aside from Poe, Jesus is Lord leader Eddie Villanueva, who is also running for president, was also expected at the party held in Dasmariñas Village in Makati City, at the residence of Jose Cojuangco Jr.

Poe and Villanueva were the only presidential aspirants invited, said Copa secretary-general Pastor Boy Saycon. Neither showed up.

Among the 200 or so guests who made it to the party: administration senatorial candidate and ex-Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II, opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, some retired generals who have formed the Association of Generals for Poe (Agpoe), former Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Teddy Casiño, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chair Rafael Mariano, former presidential adviser Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco, Couples for Christ officials, former Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing, former Rizal Rep. Francisco Sumulong; Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office director Jose "Linggoy" Alcuaz, Sanlakas lawyer Argee Guevarra; and Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr.'s daughter Marie.

No GMA, Ping

Saycon said President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom Copa had a falling out with last year, was understandably busy, while none in their group wanted to invite Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Saycon said former Sen. Raul Roco was "represented" by supporter Billy Esposo, who resigned as Copa chair last week.

Esposo came in a floral shirt like the ones Roco is known for. "I'm here to shock people," he said, referring to the Poe supporters in the party.

He and seven other Copa officials resigned after Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, a former Tarlac representative and Copa founder, was quoted as defending Poe's credentials.

Esposo claimed they did not resign due to political differences.

State witness Mary "Rosebud" Ong, who had linked Lacson to the illegal drug trade, gave away "Droga: La(x)son sa Lipunan" stickers which Lacson had taken offense at.

In separate interviews, Cojuangco and Saycon refused to categorically say if they were supporting Poe.

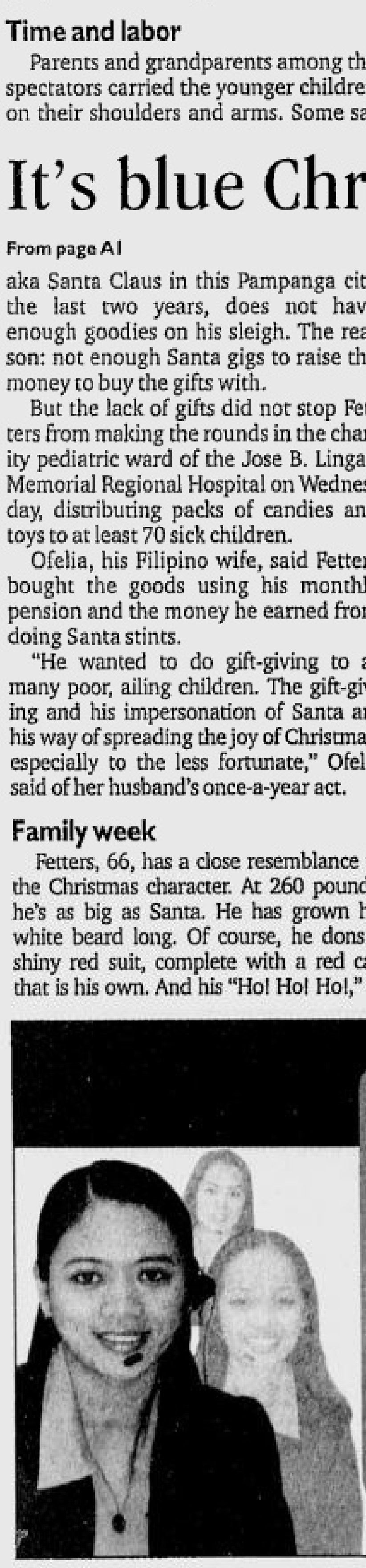
"I have not thought of that," said Cojuangco, who has been friends with Poe since 1959 when the actor helped him in his mayoral campaign in Tarlac.

"I'm still waiting for them to file their candidacy," said Saycon.

Agpoe chair Roberto Calinisan claimed his group had about 50 members. He and his companies distributed "FPJ Majority President" stickers.

Beltran said it was his group's policy not to support any presidential candidate just yet.

With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana



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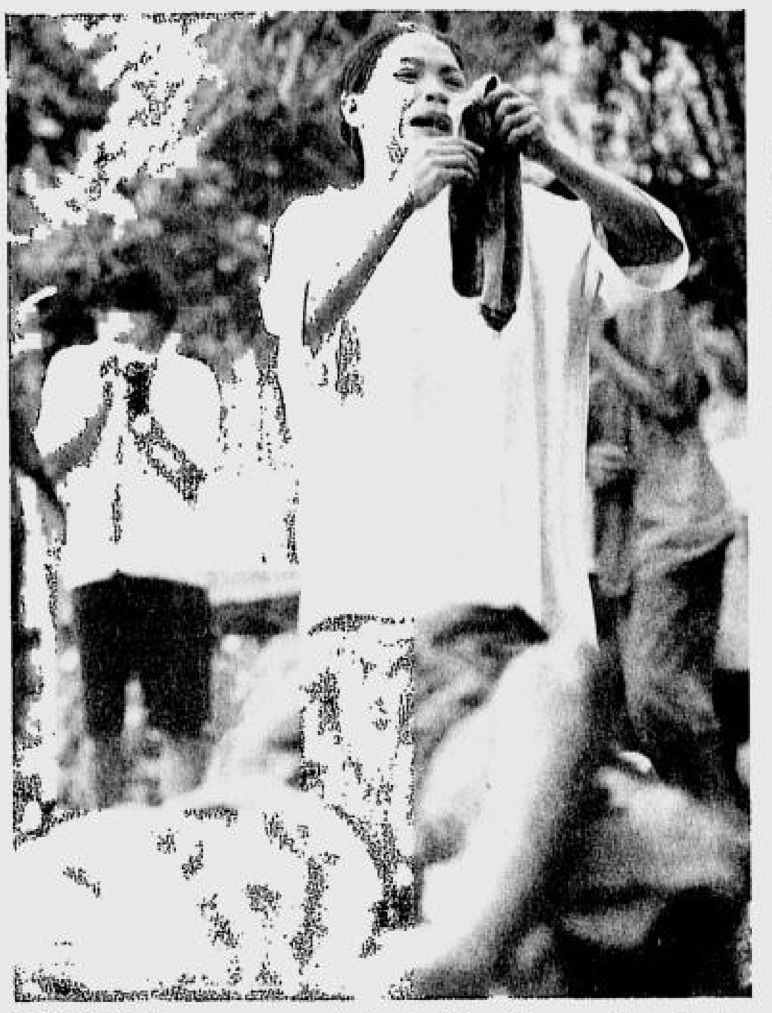


LEAH Mabalcon weeps over the body of her 10-year-old son Jimlee after it was retrieved from the muck in Lutaw District in Liloan.

EDWIN BACASMAS

'Like mountain thundering down'

From page A1

it. They were too tired to give more details of their ordeal.

The Laguras and Ngayo were given shelter at the municipal building.

Old mining area

Pinut-an, according to residents of San Ricardo, is a risk area. It was mined for gold for years during the Marcos regime. The diggings in the village stopped when then President Corazon Aquino came into power.

But the mountains were never rehabilitated.

In San Francisco town, where over 500 houses in the coastal village of Punta were also hit by landslides, the survivors' tales were heart-rending and horrible.

Dr. Bonifacio Cerio, the municipal health officer, said his heart was breaking after seeing more than 30 bodies being embalmed in the funeral homes of the town.

Cerio told the INQUIRER in a phone interview in Cebu City that he was waiting for more bodies to be recovered in Barangay Punta, about a kilometer from the town proper, where the recovery operations were still ongoing until yesterday afternoon.

Cerio said that in the whole village, only 10 houses were left standing.

Tale of horror

Diosdada Benero, 64, another survivor, said Friday night was the most horrible night of her entire life.

Getting into a boat owned by their neighbor saved her and the rest of her family, Benero said.

But the neighbors who owned the boat could no longer be found and were believed to have been swept away by the landslide, Benero said.

In between sobs, Benero, said she lost a cousin, too. Rogelio Casi, 54, was found dead after the tragedy.

Benero said Casi was with them in the rush to safety. But he decided to stay in the big house of another relative believing he would be safe there. Besides, Casi wanted to take a drink first, she said.

"*Wa lagi mouban namo kay moiinom siya og alak, di man maminaw bisan gi-unsa nako pagsulti* (He refused to go with us because he wanted to take a drink first. He would not listen to me)," Benero recalled.

Benero said Casi was found dead along with several of their neighbors who took shelter in the house of Caredad Benero Labandia, also a relative. Labandia was among the fatalities.

Benero said at least 15 families just remained in the house of Labandia. According to information she received yesterday afternoon, most of those who stayed there had died.

But miraculously, Benero noted that the sickly husband of Labandia, Lucricio, 80, was found alive during the search and rescue operations.

Benero was among the survivors who were staying in the evacuation center in the town proper.

'Abnormal' weather

She said they noted the "abnormal weather condition" as early as 5:30 p.m. Friday when they heard loud claps of thunder.

Power was cut off at about the same time, she said. They did not mind the power failure and the bad weather until she noticed that floodwaters, which were about knee-deep, had entered their house.

Benero said she and her husband, Gaudencio, 64, decided to evacuate toward the town with their two sons, Reynante, 34, and Alfemar, 24; Gaudencio's elder sister Melicia, 70, and Casi.

Because Casi decided against going with them, only five reached the shore. When they found the boat, the next problem was that it could carry only four passengers.

Benero said they made a very difficult decision of leaving behind her son, Alfemar. Benero said she told Alfemar to make sure that he could save himself.

While in the boat, Benero said she prayed for their safety. But she became nervous when she heard another loud explosion in the center of their village where their house was located.

Benero said she presumed the explosionhad been the landslide striking down their houses.

Benero said she was very thankful to God that her son also survived. She said Alfemar was able to board another outrigger boat owned by his friend.

Those who died were the ones who decided not to leave their houses, Benero said.

By yesterday afternoon, 45 bodies from Punta had been recovered, but only 33 had been identified.

Cerio said Gov. Rosette Lerias initially sent eight coffins to their town.

Relief goods also arrived in the town for the evacuees.

Ople laid to rest . . .

From page A1

treasure," even a "demigod."

During necrological rites at the Barasoin Church in Malolos City on Saturday night, Ms Macapagal conferred on Ople the Order of Lakandula with the rank of Bayani, the highest presidential award given to the country's leaders.

Ople, 76, died after a heart attack on Dec. 14 in Taipei, where a plane carrying him and other Philippine officials from Tokyo made an emergency landing after he experienced difficulty in breathing and lost consciousness. He was on his way to Bahrain to join Ms Macapagal on her two-day official visit.

Although afflicted in recent years with pneumonia and a bad cough, Ople remained an active diplomat but an unstoppable chain smoker.

About 30 foreign ministry officials from Southeast Asian countries and several ambassadors led by the dean of the diplomatic corps, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco, attended the funeral. A woman South Asian diplomatic representative in her country's traditional mourning clothes walked barefoot during the procession.

Cabinet members, lawmakers and military officials joined members of Ople's family, his friends in the labor sector and the media, and his townmates from Hagonoy, Bulacan, in the solemn procession while the military band played "Nearer my God to Thee."

The funeral convoy which brought Ople's casket from the Barasoin Church arrived at the Libingan ng mga Bayani at 11 a.m. Shortly before noon, Ople's coffin was lowered into the ground. His wife, sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren threw white roses on the casket. White balloons and butterflies were released into the air.

Conspicuously absent from the funeral was Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., whom Ople had succeeded as foreign secretary following his resignation from the Cabinet due to policy differences with Ms Macapagal.

Officials told the media that Guingona was asked not to attend the burial for security reasons. They said the President and the Vice President should avoid being together at the same public event as much as possible.

Grove of trees

Ople's grave lies beneath a grove of trees, surrounded by tombs of other notables such as Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo, Transportation and Communications Secretary Arturo Enrile, Quezon Rep. Marcial Punzalan, Deputy Prime Minister Jose Alvarez Rono, Ambassador Alejandro Melchor, Defense Secretary Manuel Saliente and Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro.

Nearby are the graves of the Unknown Soldier of World War II and of Presidents Diosdado Macapagal and Carlos P. Garcia.

Ople served as labor minister under the dictator Marcos who was overthrown in the 1986 "People Power" Revolution. Unlike Marcos, however, Ople not only escaped an ignominious end, his political career flourished after the dictator's downfall.

Although Philippine leaders are traditionally buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Marcos has been denied that honor by presidents who followed him, fearing a backlash from Filipinos outraged by the corruption and human rights violations that marked his iron-fisted rule.

Under President Corazon Aquino, Ople served in the commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution which made it difficult for the rise of another dictator.

He won a Senate seat in 1992 and served briefly as Senate president. In 1999, Ople led senators in ratifying the Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States, which allowed for the resumption of large-scale joint military exercises in the country.

The accord eventually led to the deployment of hundreds of US forces to help train Filipino soldiers against Abu Sayyaf bandits and terrorists as part of a US-led global war on terrorism.

In July last year, Ople relinquished his Senate post when Ms Macapagal appointed him foreign secretary replacing Guingona, with whom she had had a spat over his opposition to the US military presence in the Philippines.

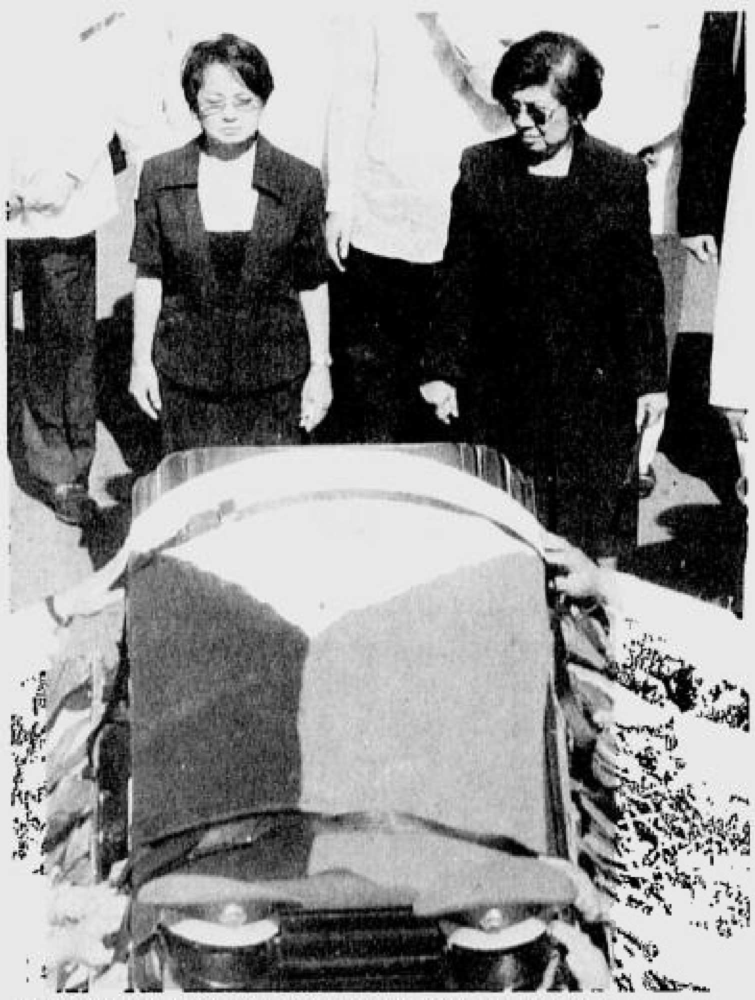
During his brief stint as foreign secretary, however, Ople came under fire from left-wing groups for his pro-US stance, particularly his support for the US-led war on Iraq that ousted Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein early this year.

Despite his frail health, Ople handled major foreign policy issues, including the Philippines' decision to allow American counterterrorist training forces in the country and a feud with Malaysia over its crackdown on Filipino illegal migrant workers.

He was also a vocal participant in the traditionally conservative Association of Southeast Asian Nations, backing democratic reforms and the release from house arrest of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in military-ruled Burma (Myanmar).

Ms Macapagal has temporarily taken over Ople's post at the Department of Foreign Affairs while she looks for a permanent replacement.

The son of a poor boat maker from Bulacan, Ople started the menial jobs, working once as a porter in the piers, before rising to become a journalist and later labor minister under Marcos. *With reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*



PRESIDENT Macapagal and Susana Ople lead mourners in paying their last respects to the late Secretary Blas Ople during the burial ceremony held at the Libingan ng mga Bayani at Fort Bonifacio.

MALACANANG PHOTO

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NANANAWAGAN KAMING MGA EMPLEYADO NG PEOPLE'S TELEVISION NETWORK, INC. (NBN) KAY PANGULONG GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO NA PAGTUUNAN NG PANSIN ANG KALAGAYAN NG AMING ISTASYON PATI NA KAMING MGA KAWANI.

Makalipas ang halos tatlong taon, mabilis na gumuho ang moral ng mga empleyado ng kuwatro dahil sa walang katiyakang kinabukasan sa kamay ng mga namumuno dito.

Lubha kaming nag-aalala dahil hindi umuusad ang pinansyal na katayuan ng istasyon ng gobyerno. Dito po sa aming Istasyon...

1. Walang katiyakan ang pagtanggap ng benepisyo.

a. As of December 19, 2003, hindi pa naibibigay ang kalahati ng cash gift at additional P5000 bonus.

b. Mula pa noong 2002, hindi nagbabayad ang opisina ng Overtime Pay kahit na tuluy-tuloy ang trabaho on holidays, weekends at day-off.

c. Matatapos na ang taon, hindi pa naibibigay ang Loyalty Pay, Night Differential, Productivity Incentive Bonus, Mid-Year Bonus at Rice Subsidy, among others.

2. Hindi naire-remit ang mga deductions.

a. Bagamat patuloy ang deductions mula sa aming mga sahod, hindi nireremit ng kasalukuyang pamunuan ang premiums/loan payments/dues/contributions sa GSIS, Union, PTV Cooperative,
Pag-ibig at PhilHealth mula pa noong taong 2002.

b. Nasa P19M na ang utang Network sa GSIS at P600,000.00 sa Pag-Ibig. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit
hindi makapag-loan ang mga empleyado mula sa nasabing government agencies.

3. Hindi Kumikita ang Network.
Hindi kumikita ang network dahil sa contracts and decisions na pinapasukan ng pamunuan na sa palagay namin ay disadvantageous.

4. Kuwestyonable ang posisyon ng President/Chairman of the Board of Directors.

a. Labag sa PTNI Charter ang pag-upo ni Mia Aquino Concio bilang President at Chairman of the Board. Nakasaad sa Republic Act No. 7306 na "the appointment of five
(5) Members of the Board who shall elect among themselves one who shall serve as Chairman of the Board". Walang posisyon na
President sa ilalim ng PTNI Charter.

b. Ang pag-upo niya bilang Chairman at President ay nasakop na niya ang responsibilidad ng Network General Manager. Nakikialam pa siya sa araw-araw na pagpapatakbo ng Network.

5. Kuwestyonable ang pagtanggap nila ng benepisyo
Noong taong 2001, tumanggap ang bawat miyembro ng Board ng Php 80,000.00 over and above sa kanilang per diems. Nahinto ang grant na ito pagkatapos na i-disallow ng COA. Ngunit hanggang sa kasalukuyan, hindi pa rin nila isinasauli ang perang tinanggap.

DAHIL SA MGA PANGYAYARING ITO MASASABING WALANG PASKO SA CHANNEL 4. NANANAWAGAN KAMI SA PANGULO NA TULUNGANG HUWAG LUMUBOG ANG PAMBANSANG NETWORK. WE NEED A LEADER WHO CAN TURN THE PEOPLE'S TELEVISION NETWORK BACK INTO ITS GLORY DAYS.

ADVT

The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTAF)

NAKTF

LIBERTAS

WANTED
FOR KIDNAPPING

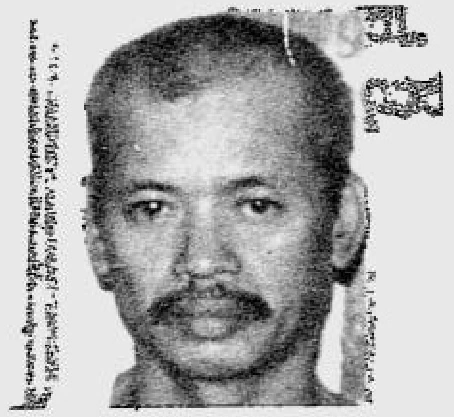
HAROLD FAJARDO
AFFILIATION: FAJARDO KFRG
AGE: 32, yrs old
Height: 5'5", Weight: 135LBS
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Barangay Suplang, Tanauan, Batangas
REWARD: Php 1,000,000

ROLANDO FAJARDO
AFFILIATION: FAJARDO KFRG
AGE: 35, yrs old
Height: 5'4", Weight: 135LBS
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Barangay Suplang, Tanauan, Batangas
REWARD: Php 1,000,000

PO2 ALLAN ESTRADA
AFFILIATION: FAJARDO KFRG
AGE: 38, HT: 5'5", WT: 135LBS
PLACE OF BIRTH: Kidapawan North Cotabato
ADDRESS: Blk 8, Lot-5, NHA ALPHA HOMES, Matina, Davao City
REWARD: Php 1,000,000

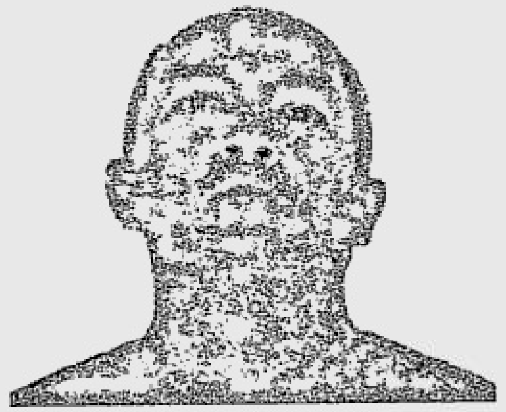
DR. EDDIE TRINIDAD, M.D.
AFFILIATION: FAJARDO KFRG
AGE:
Height: 5'6", Weight: 120LBS
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Sta. Isabela Street, Piñafrancia, Cupang, Antipolo City
REWARD: Php 850,000

REYNALDO R. CACHO
AFFILIATION: ESTRADA KFRG
AGE:
Height: Weight:
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: No. 69 Ipil Street Baltazar, Caloocan City
REWARD: Php 500,000



FELICIANO LAYGO
AFFILIATION: FELICIANO LAYGO KFRG
AGE:
Height: . Weight:
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Lipa, Batangas Lagalag, Tiaong, Quezon
REWARD: Php 500,000

JAIME MOOG
AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN
Height: Weight:
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Lipa City, Bantangas and Paisa, Tiaong, Quezon
REWARD: Php 500,000



TEDDY PADRE
AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN
AGE: 48 yrs old
Height: 5' 5" Weight: 130 lbs
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Las Piñas City
REWARD: Php 500,000

NEIL CUTAD
AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN
AGE: 32 yrs old
Height: 5' 4" Weight: 130 lbs
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

ROMEO PURIA
AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN
AGE: 32 yrs old
Height: 5' 7" Weight: 145 lbs
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

FELIZARDO PAGULAYAN
AFFILIATION: TULABOT KFRG
AGE:
Height: 5' 4" Weight: 160 lbs
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Muntinlupa City
REWARD: Php 500,000

RONNIE TAN
AFFILIATION: MOSTRALES KFRG
AGE:
Height: 5' 4" Weight: 120 lbs
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

OTHER WANTED KIDNAPPERS

MORE PANDAY
AFFILIATION: PANDAY KFRG
AGE: Height: 5'5" Weight: 120lbs
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

AMBRUDIN MACASILANG
AFFILIATION: Unknown
AGE: Height: 5"5" Weight: 125lbs
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

RONALD ROILAN
AFFILIATION: Unknown
AGE: Height: 5;5" Weight: 125lbs
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

PECASIANO TAGLE
AFFILIATION: Unknown
AGE: 38 yrs old Height: Weight:
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

JOEL BUÑALES
AFFILIATION: PEGARIDO KFRG
AGE: 30 YRS OLD Ht: 5'4" Wt:132 lbs
ADDRESS: Butuan City
REWARD: Php 500,000

SERGIO PANDAY
AFFILIATION: PANDAY KFRG
AGE: Height: 5"5" Weight: 130 lbs
ADDRESS: Unknown
REWARD: Php 500,000

MARIO VALERIO
AFFILIATION: Unknown
AGE: Height: Weight:
ADDRESS: Conception, Tarlac
REWARD: Php 500,000

ARNEL SUELLEN
AFFILIATION: Unknown
AGE: Height: Weight:
ADDRESS: Mabalacat, Pampanga
REWARD: Php 500,000

Any information leading to their capture, call
NAKTAF HOTLINE 727-0000
All information will be kept confidential.

*This is an updated list of wanted kidnappers as of December 20, 2003.

Please cut and display

Advt.

METROBRIEFS

Trader shoots self

POLICE are certain that businessman Jaime Rivera, 55, shot himself but are unsure if it was an accident or suicide. Rivera and two friends were having a drinking session inside his house on P. Margal Street, Sampaloc, when he took out a homemade revolver at 1:50 a.m. Citing the testimony of the victim's companions, SPO2 Virgo Villareal of the Western Police District Homicide Division said Rivera loaded three bullets in the gun and tried to fire a round through the window. The gun, however, failed. While saying that he wanted to shoot himself, Rivera pointed the gun at his chest and pulled the trigger thrice. Nothing happened until he squeezed the trigger a fourth time and it went off. He died instantly. *Tarra Quismundo*

Con artists nabbed

ALLEGED "budol-budol" operants Allene Reyeson, 28, of Pier 14, Tondo, Manila, and her cohorts thought that it would be easy to trick 71-year-old Manuel Fontanilla. They were wrong. The woman and a male companion reportedly approached Fontanilla along McArthur Highway in Valenzuela City at about 9 a.m. on Friday. They tried to befriend and gain the trust of Fontanilla but the septuagenarian had an idea of their plan. The prospective victim then shouted, "Budol-Budol kayo!" This caught the attention of PO1 Noe Saldivar and two Marines who were patrolling the area. Reyeson was collared but her cohort managed to elude arrest. The police seized a brown envelope with a bundle of money labelled P100,000 contained only P5,000. When Reyeson was brought to the Police Station III, Eliza Ocampo, 62, and Lita Nunez, 58, offered P5,000 to Saldivar and later to station commander Danilo Bugay and were promptly arrested for bribery. Later, Lucia Oligario, 73, identified Reyeson as one of the suspects who tricked her on Nov. 28 into giving up P500,000 in cash and jewelry. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Killer arrested

WESTERN Police District operatives arrested yesterday one of the suspects in the shooting of a Taiwanese tourist Wen Hua Yang in Malate, Manila on Thursday. Edwin San Diego, 32, was caught early yesterday morning while allegedly waiting for victims at a dark area of Arellano Zobel Street, which bounds Makati and Manila. San Diego was positively identified by Chan-Shin Chang, 23, who was with the victim during the incident. On Saturday afternoon, the suspect in the shooting of college student Christian Reyes, nephew of beauty expert Ricky Reyes, was also arrested. Jomar Renemantaw, 22, of Quirino Avenue, allegedly shot and killed Reyes with a 38-caliber pistol. The victim fought off the suspect when the latter tried to take his cellular phone along Quirino Avenue. *Tarra Quismundo*

15-HOUR WAIT ENDS

Stranded passengers sail home

By Tarra Quismundo

AFTER more than 15 hours of waiting, they finally got aboard a ship on their way home.

Around 200 passengers bound for Cagayan de Oro, who were holding tickets to a Saturday night trip, set sail yesterday morning on board Sulpicio Lines MV Filipina passenger vessel.

The passengers had been waiting for MV Princess of Paradise since Saturday evening at the Sulpicio Lines terminal on Pier 12 at the Manila North Harbor.

Instead, they were accommodated in MV Filipina, a ship big enough to ferry around 2,000 passengers to its regular route of Cebu, Surigao and Davao.

The ship will take them to Cebu by 7 a.m. today. From there, a shuttle bus will take the passengers to another ship, Princess of the Ocean.

This ship will take them to Cagayan de Oro by 7 a.m. on Wednesday, Christmas Eve, according to Joselito Planas, security guard and passenger escort at the Sulpicio Lines terminal.

Planas said the passengers did not have to pay additional fees for the two trips that would take them to Cagayan de Oro.

The passengers, however, were forced to spend the night at the waiting area in the terminal. Planas said that the stranded passengers were provided dinner and breakfast before they departed yesterday morning.

While the passengers were accommodated in the Cebu-bound MV Filipina, others got a refund and decided to take a flight or a bus ride to Cagayan de Oro, Planas said.

MV Princess of Paradise was supposed to ferry the passengers from Manila to Cagayan de Oro at 8 p.m. last Saturday.

But the vessel, based on a report of the Philippine Coast Guard Action Center, got stuck at a shallow portion of the sea at Punta, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, around 2 a.m. on Friday.

The vessel, with some 260 passengers bound for Agusan from Manila on board, reportedly drifted near the shore due to big waves and strong winds.

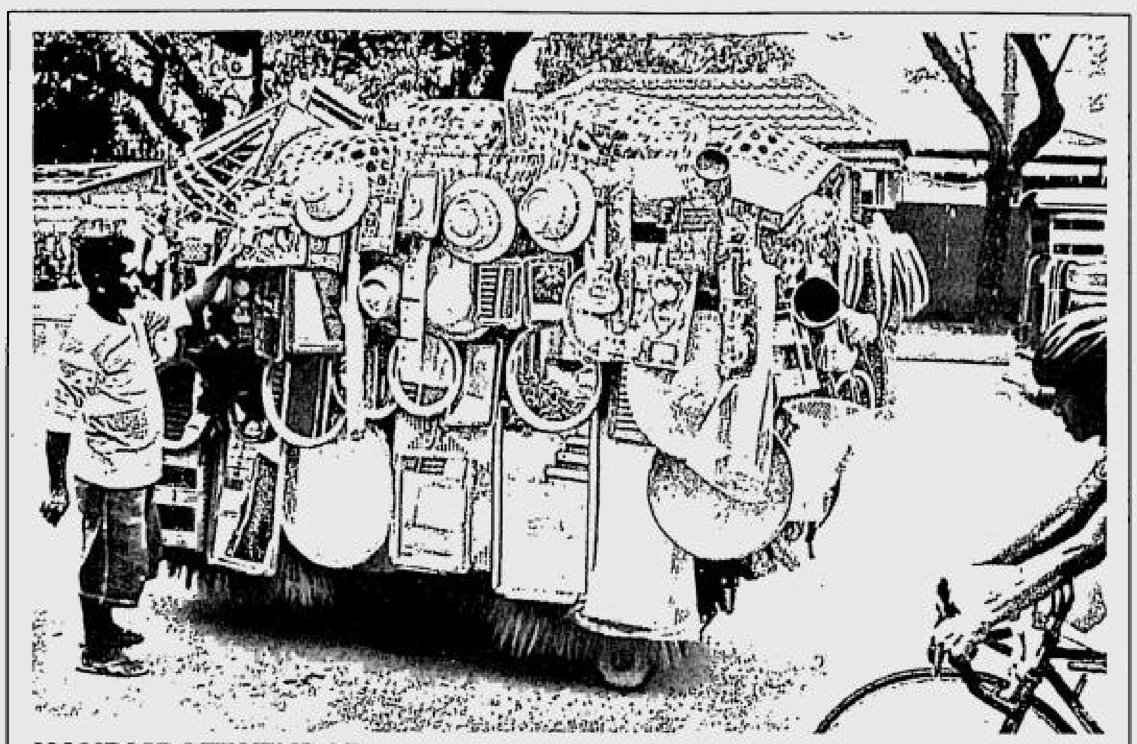
MV Cebu Princess, the ship sent to rescue MV Princess and its passengers, also ran adrift on the same area where the first ship got stuck.

Around 6 to 7 p.m. on the same day, the vessels were already towed away from the shallow waters.

MV Princess of Paradise, however, failed to return to Manila for its trip on Saturday evening, as it was still going to be inspected for possible damage after the incident.

There were no reported casualties in this incident, which marks 16 years of the MV Doña Paz sea tragedy that claimed the lives of 4,341 passengers and crew members.

Also a Sulpicio Lines ship, MV Doña Paz sank after it collided with oil tanker MT Vector on Dec. 20, 1987.



HANDICRAFT VENDOR
The Christmas season has not deterred this ambulant vendor from selling his products made from local materials like rattan and buri in the streets of Metro Manila. RUDY ESPERAS

2 fires hit Camanava; baby dies

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

A 6-MONTH-OLD boy died and more than 200 houses were destroyed during a fire which hit a depressed area in Navotas yesterday afternoon.

Caloocan fire chief Agapito Nacario identified the victim as Egiebel Romano.

The Navotas Police said the fire began around 3 p.m. in one of the houses on R10 Road, North Bay Boulevard South and spread quickly to the nearby houses due to strong winds.

At least 18 fire trucks from as far as Makati City responded to the fire, responding policeman PO3 Charlie Bontigao told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He also said that some residents told him that the fire began at the house of a certain "Alma," who is allegedly the mother of the baby who died in the fire.

Caloocan fire

In Caloocan City, a three-hour fire razed a residential area in Bana Street, Sta. Quiteria, yesterday afternoon.

At least 15 other houses were razed by the fire which began at 2:17 p.m. Damages were estimated at P2 million, fire investigator FO1 Marcelino Espeso II told the INQUIRER.

One of the fire victims, Ronaldo Rodriguez, said he left his house about 10 a.m. yesterday, sent his three kids to the house of his mother-in-law and went to the house of his friend where he joined in a drinking spree.

About 2 p.m., a neighbor rushed to him and said that their two-story semi-concrete house was on fire.

Rodriguez and his friends tried to help control the fire but failed. He said the Christmas presents he had kept for his children had turned to ashes.

Cops told: Go out and walk the beat

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

GO OUT of your police stations and walk the beat.

This was the Christmas message of National Capital Region Police Office director Ricardo De Leon to his policemen, adding that problems and their solutions could not be found inside the offices but out there in the streets.

"*Ang labanan ay nasa kalye, wala sa opisina* (The battle is in the streets, not in the offices). That is the calling of the times," De Leon said.

To promote this, De Leon also gave his men several guidelines outlined as KALYE, the Filipino term for street.

The "K" stands for *kaibigan* (friend). He said the policemen should be the enemies of criminals but the best friends of the public.

Thus, there is a need to change the stereotype that policemen are, just like the criminals they are supposedly after, to be feared.

The "A" stands for Alagad ng Batas. De Leon said that policemen should always be in their uniforms and go out in the streets where the job is.

As an officer tasked to promote peace and order, policemen should also act as leaders ("L") in the community and earn the respect of the public.

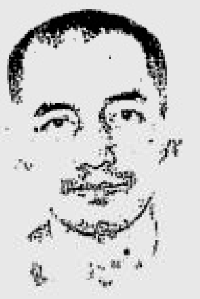
The "Y" stands for Yaman ng Kaalaman. De Leon added that policemen should courteously entertain questions from people and should know matters concerning their job, even as simple as traffic directions.

The "E" stands for being good examples. Recognizing the bad image of the police, De Leon said policemen should strive to be good examples of the laws they enforce.

De Leon made the directive on Friday as he dropped by the five police districts in the metropolis, which were simultaneously holding their Christmas parties.

His remarks drew various reactions from the policemen. Some kept on nodding, the others did not pay attention.

Search continues for Queboy



ENRIQUE G. Santos (right), 46, married with three children and resident of Makati City, has been missing since May, 2002.

He is suffering from memory lapses. "Queboy," as he is called, is 5'4" and weighs 120 pounds and has a mole on his left cheek.

Anyone who has information about his whereabouts can contact Mrs. Alice G. Cantos at 833-7261 or (0917)644-4577 or e-mail searching4queboy@yahoo.com.

Guidelines on Metro checkpoints

(The following are some of the frequently asked questions on checkpoints issued by the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force)

• WHY are there checkpoints on Metro Manila roads?

The checkpoints around Metro Manila and NCR are part of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF)-initiated security measures approved by the President to curb kidnapping in the country.

The conduct of the checkpoints, chokepoints and police and military foot patrols shall increase visibility of law enforcement authorities to effectively deter the incidence of kidnapping, particularly in Metro Manila. Checkpoints, in particular, are meant to cut the movement of kidnap-for-ransom groups and other criminals and deny them freedom of movement in the conduct of their activities.

• Is my vehicle subject to inspection at checkpoints?

Under the guidelines issued by the NAKTF, there is a high probability that your car will be subjected to inspection. As a general rule, the most likely vehicles to be examined are those that are heavily tinted, those occupied by armed or uniformed individuals, those with suspicious-looking passengers, those carrying a dubious number of occupants, those with irregular identification numbers, those that have special plates and those that have no license plates.

• Who are manning these checkpoints?

Checkpoints are jointly-manned by police, military and civilian components from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

• How do I know if a checkpoint is legitimate?

Legitimate checkpoints shall have proper signage, e.g., "Slow down, NAKTF/PNP Checkpoint." Marked police and military vehicles are parked right beside the checkpoint. Secretary Angelo Reyes, NAKTF chief, has issued specific instructions that all checkpoints should be led by an officer, not lower in rank than a lieutenant or police inspector.

• What procedures should I follow when I pass through a checkpoint?

Motorists should slow down, switch headlights off, stop upon signal, roll windows down, switch on cabin lights and submit their vehicles to ocular inspection.

• What procedures should I expect from the checkpoint personnel?

Personnel manning the checkpoints have been instructed to be strict, stern but courteous at all times. Motorists will be signaled to slow down, and if necessary, signaled to stop. Further, the motorists will be requested to roll down their windows for a visual search of the vehicle. Personnel manning the checkpoints are also instructed to conduct inspections as brief as possible to avoid inconveniencing motorists and obstructing the continuous flow of traffic.

• What are the limitations of searches at checkpoints?

Under the general guidelines issued by NAKTF, strict adherence to human rights shall be emphasized in all undertakings. Searches made at checkpoints and chokepoints shall be limited to visual search.

• If I encounter problems at checkpoint, where can I ask for help?

For assistance, you can either call the 24-hour NAKTF Hotline: 727-0000 or the DILG/PNP Hotline: 117.

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

High and dry Xmas

RESIDENTS of Las Piñas City, Bacoor and Imus towns in Cavite will be wishing for water this Christmas after workers hit a main pipe of the Maynilad Water Services Inc. yesterday in Parañaque City and totally cut off their water supply.

In an interview, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando said a contractor of the agency punctured the water main while building a footbridge at the corner of Naia Road, Roxas Boulevard and the Coastal Road.

"They were conducting pile-driving activities at the intersection when they hit the pipe," Fernando said.

The activity was for laying of the foundation of a footbridge that would allow access to the Uniwide Coastal Mall from Naia Road.

According to the MMDA chair, repair work could last for three days, hinting that people in the affected areas could have water on Christmas day.

However, the Maynilad, in a statement, could not say when water service would resume since they were still assessing the damage.

Maynilad said MMDA contractor Freyssinet damaged the water pipe that carried water to the Southern Water Districts at about 2 a.m. yesterday.

It identified the affected areas as Sucat Road in Parañaque City, Imus and Bacoor, both in Cavite.

Eric Dumancas, Maynilad South Business Area Manager, said these areas were "totally without water."

"The area from Roxas Boulevard, Naia Road intersection, up to Lopez Subdivision, is also waterless," he added.

PEDESTRIANS walk on wet and partly flooded Naia Road after the pile-driving machine (left background) hit a water main at the intersection of Roxas Boulevard. JESS YUSON

Atienza asks building folk to light up

By Tarra Quismundo

MAYOR Joselito Atienza Jr. is urging building owners in Manila to light up their establishments to help brighten up the city.

"Can you imagine all buildings on Roxas Boulevard well-lighted from the outside? It would be a beautiful sight," Atienza said in a phone interview yesterday.

According to the mayor, business and building owners should take the initiative to illuminate their premises and surroundings to attract customers.

"For instance, in Avenida," he said, "If business owners that have renovated their buildings would direct spotlights on their establishements, it will show the character of the buildings and make them stand out at night.

He said building and business owners could coordinate with City Hall on the amount and type of lighting to install.

More lighting, Atienza noted, would not only make Manila's streets more attractive, but also help curb crime.

"Well-lighted surroundings will definitely lessen crime on the streets," said Atienza.

The mayor likewise encouraged barangays to use their own funds to illuminate dark alleys and walkways.

City Hall has lighted up Manila's streets and avenues, like Quezon Boulevard, the avenues of Taft, Rizal and Lacson, and the streets of Pedro Gil and Juan Luna, with "castillian" street lamps.

Such street lamps, however, have been a favorite of thieves, who dismantle and sell them to interested parties.

Manila Water spending ₱.5B for '04 projects

By Tina Santos

CUSTOMERS of the Manila Water Company Inc. can expect cleaner and safer water soon, after the firm announced that it would be spending P500 million to replace 900 kilometers of old pipes and lay out 45 kilometers of new lines.

Antonio Aquino, president of the Ayala-led utility concessionaire, said the outlay was not only to improve service but also to prevent water-borne diseases in its service areas.

In a statement, Aquino reported that over 25 kilometers of pipelines, costing P200 million, were currently being laid out in Quezon City.

Also, several packaged sewage treatment plants were being built to significantly improve water availability in the area.

"We intend to do a lot more, particularly in terms of projects that provide clean and affordable water supply to the city's urban poor population and those that require consistent water quality in critical institutions like public schools, day-care centers, clinics and hospitals," Aquino said.

Aquino also cited Manila Water's Tubig Para sa Barangay program for the city's depressed communities, which has brought safe water to over 25,000 families, and the Lingap Eskwela program, which regularly monitors the water quality in all public schools in the city.

However, while Mayor Feliciano Belmonte lauded the water concessionaires' efforts to improve water supply coverage, he stressed that there have been complaints from different barangays about the "slow and oftentimes substandard restoration work" by some of Maynilad's contractors.

"Contractors must leave the roads of Quezon City in the same condition they had found it before they did their excavations," Belmonte was quoted as saying.

Antonio, for his part, has vowed to address the issue of road restorations for Manila Water projects immediately.

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Arroyo foundation earns PSA citation for helping athletes A26

FLEXING HIS MUSCLE: Pacquiao will be paid $1 million for his next fight against Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico. AP

Pacquiao fights dual champ Marquez next

Title bout slated in Las Vegas

By Salven L. Lagumbay

IT'S green and go for yet another superbattle for the Filipino king of the world's featherweights.

The reigning "people's featherweight champion" and Ring Magazine's featherweight king Manny Pacquiao is slated to battle WBA and IBF featherweight champ Juan Manuel "Dinamita" Marquez of Mexico in a 12-round titular encounter in Las Vegas either in the last week of March or in early April.

The 25-year-old Pacquiao (38-2-1, 30 KOs) will stake his pound-for-pound billing in this fight, while Marquez (42-2, 33 KOs) risks his two world title belts in a fight that has "Fight of the Year" written all over it.

The southpaw Pacquiao is leaving for the United States this Friday to sign the contract

PACQUIAO/ A26

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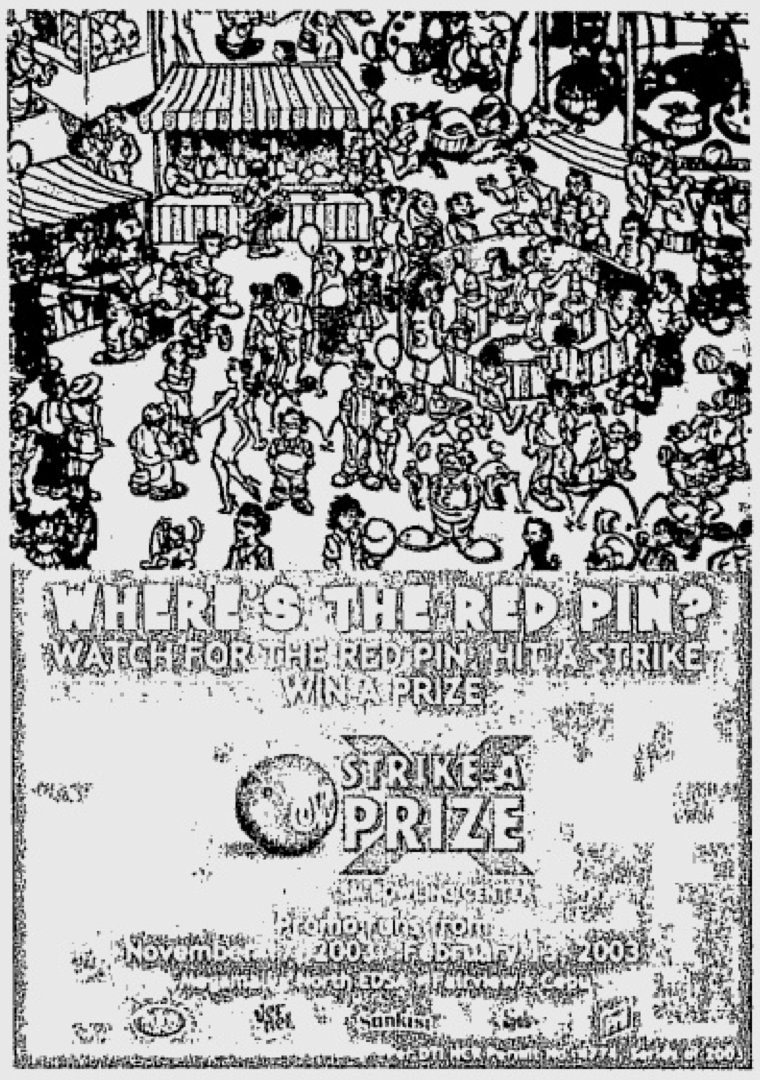

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PSA Awards citation for Mike Arroyo foundation

THE FIRST Gentleman Foundation of Atty. Mike Arroyo leads organizations and individuals to be cited during the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Annual Awards Night on Jan. 9 at the Manila Pavilion.

The foundation raised a total of P22.4 million to boost the preparations of Filipino athletes in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, which ended last week.

The foundation's program, "Medalyang Ginto, May Laban Tayo," was created to aid promising Filipino athletes. It yielded 177 medals, including the country's golden haul of 48 in the SEAG, where the Philippines placed fourth overall.

ARROYO

Other organizations to be cited are the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa), FedEx, Philippine Bowling Congress, the Far Eastern University Tamaraws, Philippine Racing Commission and Samsung.

Rising from the tragedy that almost took away his life, athletics godfather Go Teng Kok made 2003 a banner year for the Patafa.

After hosting the 15th edition of the Asian Athletics Championships in September, the Patafa emerged the biggest gold-medal producer in Vietnam with eight, and 17 medals overall.

FedEx re-ignited local interest in cycling when it resurrected the Tour Pilipinas—the country's biggest summer-sports spectacle.

The Philippine Bowling Congress created the loudest noise on the regional bowling scene with the victories of the trio of Liza Clutario, Liza del Rosario and Cecilia Yap in the World Tenpin Bowling Championship and CJ Suarez in the World Cup of Bowling in Honduras.

Individuals who will be cited are Steve Hontiveros, who in September became the first Filipino to be elected president of the International Bowling Federation; Josephine Cañare, who finished fourth in the women's division at the World Cup of Bowling in Honduras and joined forces with Suarez to give the Philippines the Best Performance by a Country Award; Asian zonal champion and grandmaster-candidate Ronald Dableo, Asian Supercross champion Glenn Aguilar, and teen golfers Jayvee Agojo, Allenby Jiro Ramos, Dottie Ardina and Miguel Tabuena, all winners of world junior titles.

PLATINUM CUP

Race for semis slots heats up

THE FRENETIC race for the three remaining semifinals berths in the PBL Platinum Cup takes another twist today as five contenders try to outdo each other at the Pasig Sports Center.

And for the first time in years, the league will treat fans to almost six hours of basketball. All three games will be aired live on Solar Sports.

"This is our Christmas gift to our avid fans before we take another break for the holidays," said Commissioner Chino Trinidad.

"This is our own little way of helping generate interest in the sport."

Except for Welcoat Paints, which secured a semis slot last Thursday, the five teams still in contention are expected to fight tooth and nail to boost their chances of making it into the next round.

Viva Mineral Water-FEU will be fighting for survival against the faltering Montaña Jewels, Sunkist-UST will be gunning for the second semis slot against powerhouse Welcoat, while Fash Liquid collides with Blustar in the battle between detergent giants.

Only ICTSI-La Salle is already out of the picture with a woeful 2-8 record.

With a 6-4 record, the Tigers need only to win one of their two remaining games to advance to the next round. But the prospect of beating the James Yap-led Paint Masters and the Tigers' bid to extend their winning run to four seems great.

Sunkist's bid to prevail over Welcoat depends largely on the shooting hands of Alex Compton and the fast-rising Jemmal Vizvarra, the team's 1-2 punch.

Compton was amazing the last time out. Hitting eight triples, he posted a tournament-high 31 points in leading the Tigers' to a stunning 101-94 overtime win over Montaña.

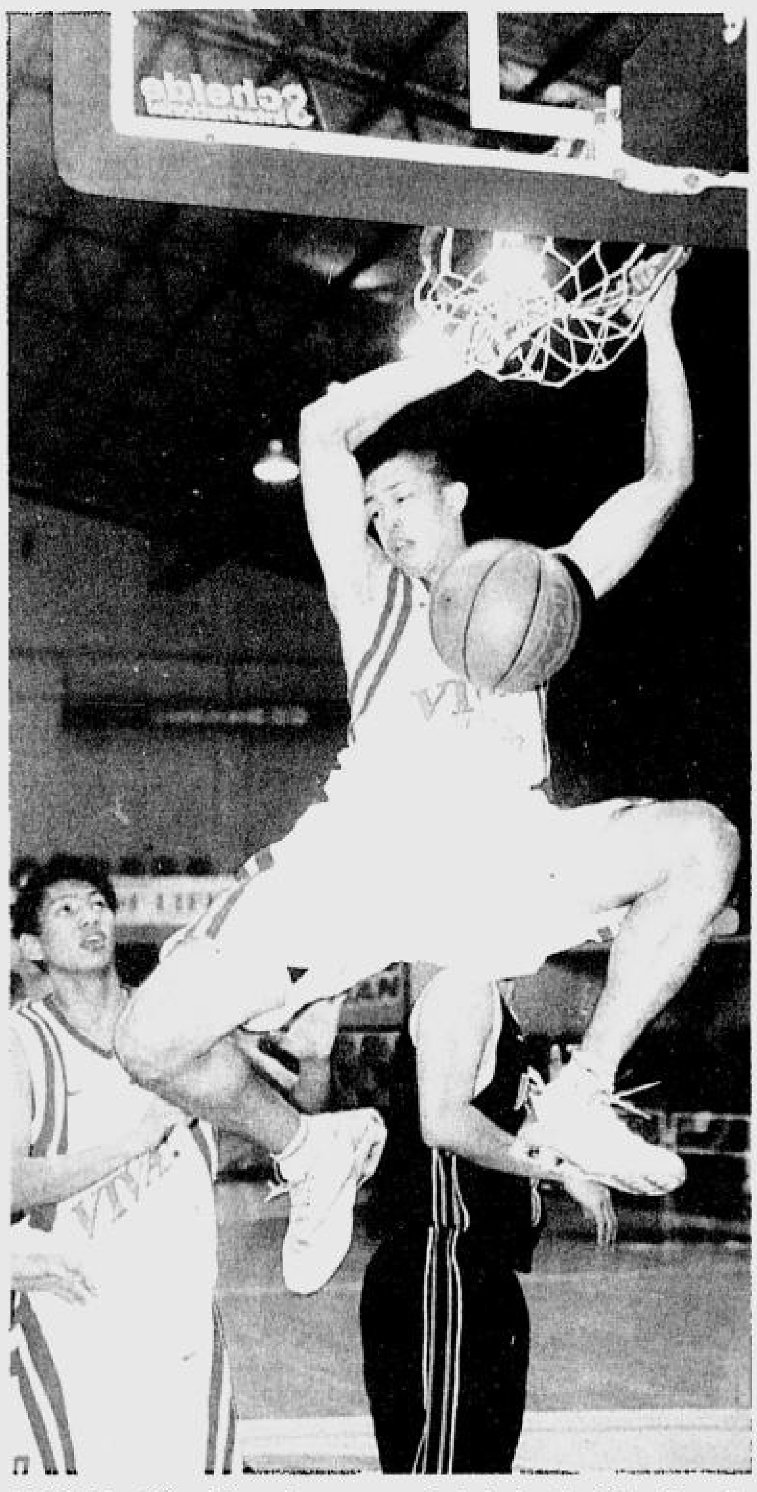
Vizcarra, who like Compton also has a deft shooting touch from long range, added 28 on 5-for-10 shooting from the 3-point zone, a feat that boosted his stock as the next important player in the UAAP next season.

Inspired by their title win over San Sebastian in the recent Champions League, the Water Force are slowly getting back their once deadly form. Their masterful 62-53 win over the Archers enabled them to stay in the hunt with a 2-6 record.

The Jewels, toting a 4-4 mark, downed the Water Force in the first round,

STANDINGS	W	L
Welcoat	8	1
Sunkist	6	4
Blustar	5	4
Fash Liquid	4	4
Montana	4	4
Viva Mineral	2	6
ICTSI	2	8

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2:00 p.m.—Montana vs Viva-FEU
4:00 p.m.—Welcoat vs Sunkist
6:00 p.m.—Blustar vs Fash Liquid


MARK Isip of Viva Mineral scores on a dunk during the Water Force's 62-53 win over ICTSI-La Salle recently. E.BELLOSILLO

SPORTSWATCH

Navy lifts Globe Cup

CHAOLONG Leonar cooly struck the ball into the back of the Air Force net as Navy beat the airmen in a dramatic shootout, 4-3, Thursday to win the fifth Globe Super Cup at the Nomads field in Merville, Parañaque. Regulation time ended at 1-1, and the two teams failed to settle the issue after a 20-minute extension. Michael Jay Fernandez struck in the 35th minute to give Navy a 1-nil advantage. The airmen scored the equalizer in the 54th minute through Winnie Zubiri. Navy striker Jimmy Dona was adjudged MVP, with Ref Cuaresma taking the best goalkeeper plum and Rosano Estrabon winning the top defender title. Army's Judy Saluria was voted best midfielder and the Air Force's Ian Araneta won top goalscorer honors.

Milo netfest listing on

NATIONAL junior aspirants will slug it out when the year-ender 2003 Milo Junior Tennis Cup gets under way at the Ynares Sports and Cultural Center outdoor clay courts in Pasig Kapitolyo on Dec. 26-30. The Milo Junior Tennis Cup is one of the few remaining age group tournaments that gives top finishers Philta points, the yardstick for qualification to next year's World NIT 14-under and Junior Davis Cup squads. Featured events in the Milo netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop and supported by Wilson balls, adidas and NBN-4 Sunday TV show Sports Kids are the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and the unisex 10-under divisions. Tournament referee Rene Selmar said that doubles will be organized for the 21-under, 18-under, 14-under and 10-under categories. Deadline for registration is set at noontime on Wednesday at the Pasig Kapitolyo venue.

Las Piñas 3-cocker today

BIG-TIME and medium-scale cockers are seeing action today in another special 3-cock derby at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Cockpit. More than 50 fights are scheduled beginning at 7 p.m. Invited by derby host Rudy Sayaman are popular cockers from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Metro Manila. At stake is a cash prize of P200,000. For inquiries, call 873-1040. Meanwhile, the "Grand Opening 4-Cock Derby," Las Piñas Cockpit's fire-starter for the 2004 cock season, sizzles on Jan. 3 with big prizes and surprise giveaways awaiting the champions.

Pacquiao fights Marquez next

From page A25

for the fight, where he will reportedly get $1 million (about P55 million) as purse.

"*Aalis na ako sa* Dec. 26 *para mag*-sign *ng* contract," Pacquiao told the INQUIRER at ringside while cheering for his brother Bobby's RP title defense against Renato Inal Saturday night in Subic. *(See related story)*

The Pacquiao-Marquez bout will be promoted by Bob Arum's Top Rank promotion, which also promotes Marquez.

Among the talents also being promoted by Top Rank are Oscar De la Hoya, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales, Paulie Ayala, Bones Adams, Jesus Chavez, Jose Luis Castillo, Miguel Cotto, and Erik Morel.

The power-punching Mexico City native Marquez last saw action on Nov. 1, when he easily beat Derrick Gainer in seven rounds to add the IBF title to his WBA crown. Marquez has won his last 13 fights dating back to 1999.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Vintage NBA; 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Solar Sports—Take a look back at one of the first great Europeans in the NBA, Drazen Petrovic, and the legendary coach of the New York Knicks—Red Holzman.

NBA-Blazers vs Kings; 10 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Sixers vs Celtics; 7 p.m.; IBC 13—It's going to be a pacific coast party as Portland visits Sacramento while Atlantic division rivals Philadelphia and Boston tangle with each other.

US NCAA-ACC; 6 p.m.; Solar Sports—Catch a glimpse of the future NBA stars as they battle in one of the best conferences in the collegiate ranks.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL-Broncos vs Colts; 9:30 a.m. (r-5 p.m.); ESPN—Denver travels to Indianapolis in this match-up of AFC contenders.

BILLIARDS: US 9 Ball; 4 p.m.; Solar Sports—It's an All-American battle as Jeremy Jones clashes with Keith McReady.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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Carlton B/R 60
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Yonex B/R B760
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Prince Tour 1000i
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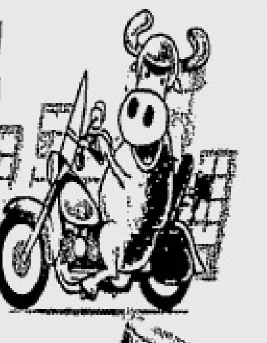
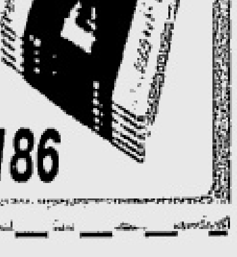
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Malonso and Pacquiao: Yule request and package

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(TODAY: Please share this timely text message. Don't 4get. Dec. 22, 2003, 6pm, Grand Atrium Shangri-la Plaza (Mandaluyong), PASKO SA LANGIT... Handog ng Batang Mandaluyong, a free concert formally launching the Mandaluyong Center for the Performing Arts. Featured are the young scholars of the Mandaluyong Choristers, Mandaluyong Rondalla, the Mandaluyong String Orchestra, with the special participation of the phenomenal Mandaluyong Children's Chorus, silver medal winner in last year's World Choir Olympics. Get ready for an unforgettable night of holiday music.Thnks.)

***

LT. Col. Julian Malonso (Res.), former president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, has a simple Christmas wish. He wants a strong statement of his on the Philippine participation in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games to see print in this paper. He says he wants the most number of people to know the truth behind the RP showing in Vietnam. He's also wondering if we would be generous (and brave enough) enough to grant his request.

Here's the Malonso statement in full:

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo says she's proud and happy that the Philippines landed FOURTH overall in the last Southeast Asian Games.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia, however, said she's ashamed of the THIRD overall performance of her national delegation in the Vietnam SEAG.

One of the reasons we participate in international competitions is to see how we compare with other countries.

We should face reality. There's nothing to be proud about.

We are going back to the time of Michael M. Keon, the nephew of President Marcos. When we missed the medals during Keon's time, the results of competitions were instead based on Philippine records, or how these simple marks were broken in international competitions.

In reality, we did not win, but officials justify the sending of big delegations by stating the need "to give athletes a chance to get experience in international competitions."

Training should be done at home, not in international competitions.

Let us not fool our people and use sports for political mileage in the coming elections.

***

MEANWHILE, the party goes on and on for world boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao.

At the newly built auditorium inside the Subic Base Metropolitan Authority Saturday night, Pacquiao had twin celebrations, the first one for his birthday which fell on Dec. 17.

They greeted him with a song, wishing the world boxing champ the best on his 25th natal day.

Of course, the bigger and more significant package was delivered by his younger brother, Bobby, the reigning RP junior lightweight boxing champ.

Bobby, with Manny tensely calling the shots, fought what could be the finest fight of his career as he bucked devastating body shots to stop the bull-strong Renato Intal in the sixth round of their championship duel.

Under siege in the earlier rounds, Bobby, pressed again, connected twice to the head then stabbed Intal with a killer left to the liver section. Whammm!

The challenger, who had knocked down the younger Pacquiao in a previous fight, fell like a wet sack.

Intal was counted out. And Bobby, for several times on the verge of wilting, leapt with joy.

But the greater gratification belonged to Manny, reigning IBF super bantam king who's reportedly set to sign a $1 million deal to fight the sensational Juan Manuel "Dinamita" Marquez, the WBA/IBF featherweight king from Mexico, 42-2, with 33 KOs.

***

An even bigger holiday package was, of course, delivered by the able writer and fight commentator Ted Lerner, newly returned from a month-long sojourn in his Mom's American kitchen.

Lerner broke the news to Pacquiao's handlers that Ring Magazine, the bible of boxing, has minted a special champion's belt honoring Manny as The True Featherweight King of the World.

Lerner said his friend Nigel Collins, Ring Magazine editor, plans to fly to Manila to personally award the belt, with Pacquiao's portrait on it.

"Of course, if may do them some good if Pacquiao's handlers could also take care of Mr. Collins travel and accommodations," Lerner advised.

Lerner said the proposed visit could result into a special Ring feature not only on Pacquiao but on RP boxing, its legendary past and glorious present, as well.

By the way, Lerner also informed that Manny Pacquiao will be featured on the cover of Ring's next issue.

"Because Ring doesn't charge sanction fees, and does its thing based specifically on the boxers' record and merits, no politics, the credit won from it by Manny Pacquiao is the greatest thing to ever happened to Philippine boxing," Lerner said.

Pacquiao's brod halts Inal in 6th

By Salven L. Lagumbay

SUBIC—Reigning Philippine junior lightweight champion Bobby Pacquiao, egged on at ringside by his illustrious brother Manny, stopped challenger Renato Inal in the sixth round Saturday night at the Subic Metropolitan Gymnasium here.

In the main undercard, Cebuano phenom Z Gorres prevailed via a split decision over RP superflyweight king Eric Barcelona.

Pacquiao and Inal figured in the night's most exciting fight, staying at the center of the ring in a toe-to-toe war for most of the contest.

But Pacquiao refused to be cowed by the muscle-bound Inal, digging deep into his foe's midsection with a series of shots and sending him to the canvas writhing in pain in the dying seconds of the sixth round.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair Felicito Payumo and Manny Pacquiao awarded the belt to Bobby.

In the undercard, Gorres won in a battle of wits over the veteran Barcelona.

Judge Ferdie Estrella scored it 96-95 and referee Bruce McTavish penned it 96-93 both for Gorres, while the third judge Narciso Martinez saw it 97-92 for Barcelona.

The win avenged the loss inflicted by Barcelona on Gorres' stablemate Sherwin Paro last month in Parañaque City.

The victory also improved Gorres' record to 15-1, with 9 KOs. Barcelona dipped to 22-5-4 (9 KOs).

RP No. 2 Joel Bauya scored a 7th round TKO over another Cebuano, Noel Sungahid, for the interim RP bantam title.

COACHES' COACH
San Antonio Spurs head coach Greg Popovic is flanked by brothers Derick and Dindo Pumaren who observed and studied the latest coaching strategies in the NBA and US collegiate teams. The Pumarens trained for two months with the Spurs, the Dallas Mavericks, the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Southern California.

JAPAN DEBACLE

Que finishes dead-last

HE wanted to finish ahead of the pack but Angelo Que ended up last.

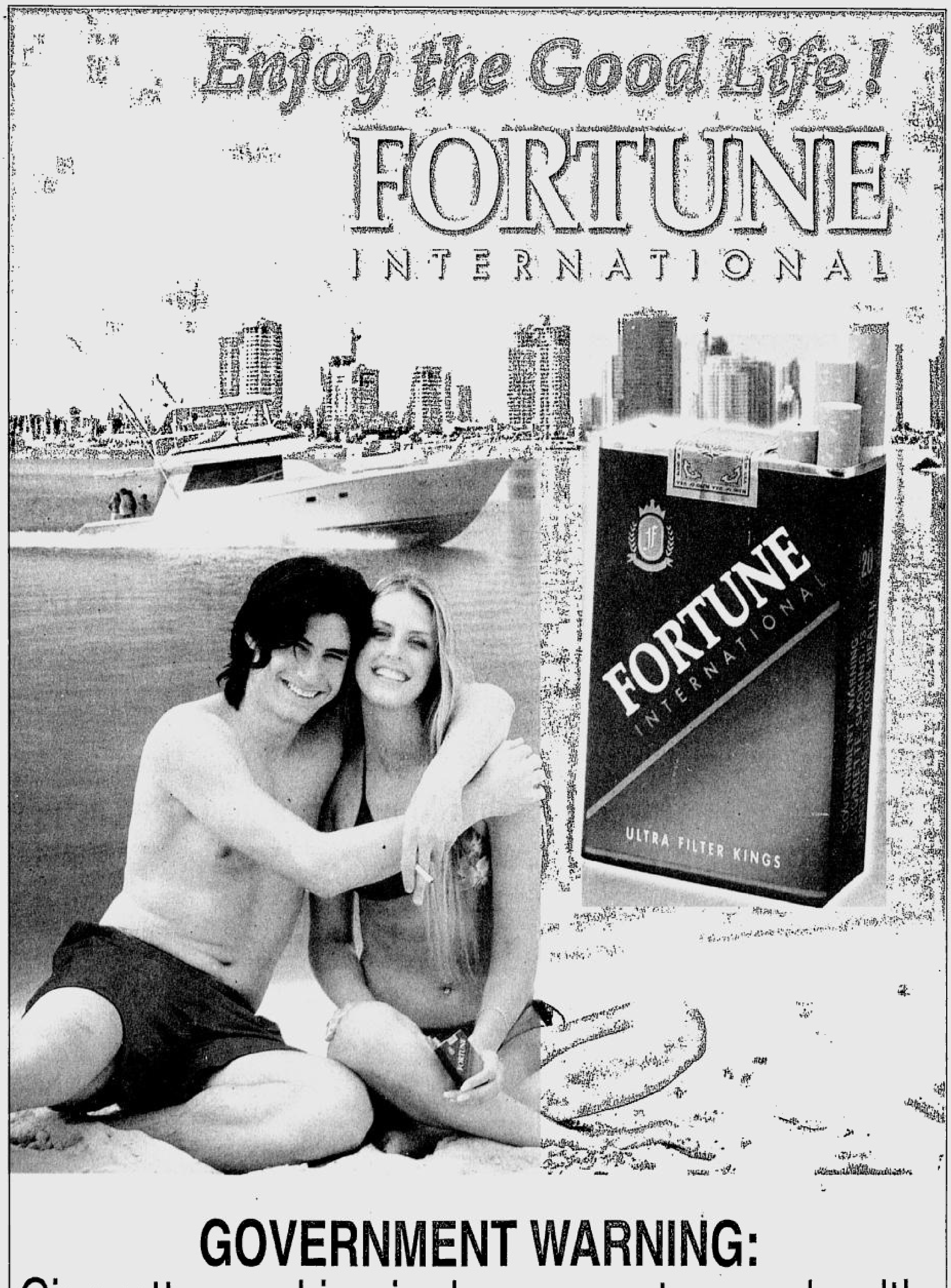
Que's chase for a win in his first stint on the Japan Tour ended in a humbling experience with his closing three-over-par 75—no thanks to a last-hole double-bogey—yesterday, putting him at 61st place in the Asia-Japan Okinawa Open. He could have joined a three-way tie for 59th spot were it not for that sputtering finish.

Que's first paycheck for the new season was 227,000 yen (about P115,000). He was hoping to win the event to avoid going through the Qualifying School of the Asian Tour, where he finished second last year.

Hideto Tanihara won the the event jointly sanctioned by the Asian PGA and the Japan Tour after an eight-under 64. Posting a 72-hole aggregate of 278, he finished four strokes ahead of a big seven-man bunch. Sharing second place were Tsuneyoshi Yoneyama (70), Chung Joon (70), Simon Yates (68), Hiroshi Goda (71), Ted Oh (71), Yusaku Miyazaki (65) and Charlie Wi (64).

Canadian Rick Gibson tied for 10th after scoring a 70 for 284.

Jong Arcano



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Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

COURSE LESSON: 'Children, remember that texting is not allowed while playing.'

PHOTOS BY ROGER MARGALLO

Young guns today, big guns tomorrow

By Jong Arcano

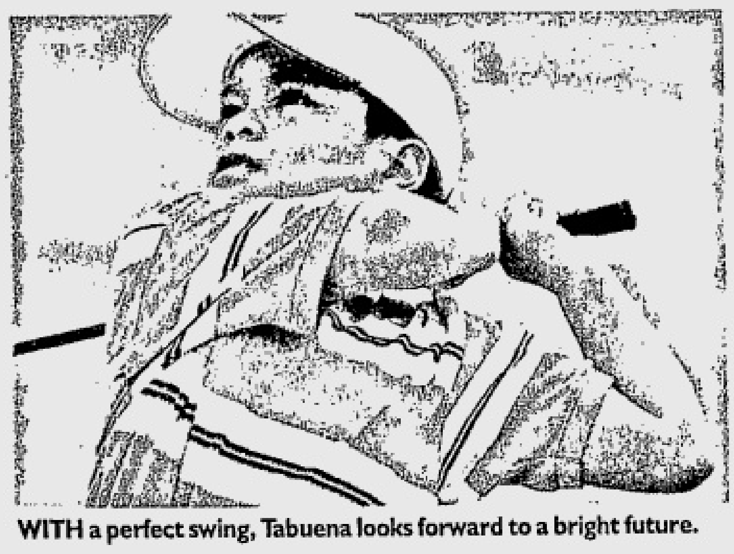
IT WAS the day the Young Guns came and fired away—kids with the same ambition of following in Tiger's footsteps. The many monsters of the Southwoods Legends failed to scare them away, the cold December winds not enough to sweep them off their narrow stance. "Look, ma, I've got a birdie!" said a 6-year-old, his short pants pulled waist-high. "I came here to win," said a 9-year-old hotshot, her ponytail wagging out of the hole of a little cap emblazoned with the swoosh. Big dreams from little people. Full swings full of hope and little strokes out to conquer the world. The Young Guns' party it was simply called, because only players 12 years or younger were invited. Toddlers with the right kind of attitude, little girls with the vision of joining the big leagues—a la Jennifer Rosales. Kids who love the game of golf. Breeding champions is never easy. But there's no better first step than starting them young.

Someday they will be called big guns.

WOLEN Juan Superal stands too tall for all.

RISING star AR Ramos, 7, knows the ABCs of putting.

MIGUEL Tabuena reacts to a missed shot the way he sees his idol do it on the PGA.



WITH a perfect swing, Tabuena looks forward to a bright future.

RED is the winning color for Bino dela Paz.

James puts up show for Jordan

CHICAGO—LeBron James did the No. 23 proud in his idol's house.

With Michael Jordan watching from a skybox, James scored a game-high 32 points and had a career-high 10 assists Saturday night to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to their second straight road win, a 95-87 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

"What can you say? He's big-time now," Cleveland coach Paul Silas said. "He hit some big shots, got big rebounds and played defense. We need it, and he provides it for us."

It was James' third double-double of the season, his first since Nov. 29. He was 11-of-22 from the floor, and was 10-of-12 from the line. He also had six rebounds, two steals and two blocks while turning the ball over four times.

"If you knock it all back to the basics of the game, I think you would be hard-pressed to find too many guys in the league that can do those things as well as he can," Bulls coach Scott Skiles said.

The loss spoiled the Bulls' homecoming party. Jordan attended his second game of the year, watching in a suite with former teammates Charles Oakley and Will Perdue. Jay Williams also was at the game, his first since the devastating June motorcycle accident that's threatened his career. Williams, who is still on crutches and is undergoing rehabilitation at Duke, sat behind his old teammates on the floor.

Jamal Crawford finished with 16 points, he was just 7-for-27.

In other games it was the Knicks 103, Hawks 92; Hornets 94, Grizzlies 89; Bucks 92, Nets 87; Clippers 115, Mavericks 105; Timberwolves 102, Pacers 80; SuperSonics 115, Nuggets 106; Suns 102, Rockets 87; Spurs 101, Trail Blazers 91.

In New York, Don Chaney yanked Howard Eisley and inserted Frank Williams early in the third quarter, a snap coaching decision that may have saved Chaney's job.

Williams had four assists in a 15-0 third-quarter run that gave New York the lead for good in a 103-92 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Saturday night.

The victory was just the third in 11 games for the Knicks (10-18), whose coach is reportedly in danger of being fired if the team continues to languish amid the lower half of the woeful Atlantic Division.

In Portland, Tim Duncan had 26 points and 10 rebounds for his league-leading 23rd double-double this season as San Antonio beat Portland to extend its winning streak to 10 games. *AP*

JAMES soars high for another

Buccaneers crash out of

TAMPA, Florida—The Super Bowl champion Buccaneers nearly dug themselves out of a huge hole, but finally saw their National Football League playoff hopes buried Saturday in a 30-28 loss to Atlanta.

Needing to win their final two games and receive help to make the playoffs, Tampa Bay trailed 30-7 after three quarters before nearly coming all the way back.

"I am very proud of our football team—the character they showed in the last 15 minutes of the game," Bucs coach Jon Gruden said.

Pro Bowl defensive tackle Warren Sapp accepted the fact
would not be in the pos

"You look at it early i
looked at some of the tea
made it, and you kind o
It's a reality now," he said

Brad Johnson, who w
four times in the first ha

Tapia dispels drug claims

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico—Boxer Johnny Tapia brushed off suggestions that he overdosed on drugs, saying cough medicine and Tylenol led to his one-night stay in a hospital.

"If I'm going to overdose, I'm going to go for it. I'm not hesitating, you know," the five-time champion said Saturday after being released from the hospital.

The latest hospital stay comes after Tapia collapsed at his Nevada home earlier this year and was hospitalized for what his wife, at the time, said was a drug overdose.

The latest trip to the hospital was because of a "silly mistake," Teresa Tapia said.

She said the trouble started when her husband took cough medicine that had been prescribed for her. He didn't know it contained codeine, which he is allergic to. *AP*

Incentives should be for all deserving achievers

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

REPUBLIC Act 9064, the one and only law which provides incentives for outstanding Filipino athletes and coaches, is indeed a step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough because only those achievements in quadrennial competitions like the Olympics and Asian Games and biennial Southeast Asian Games are rewarded.

Despite public clamor, past achievements in annual and biennial competitions have been unjustly omitted. RA 9064 does not reward achievers in non-Olympic sports like bowling, golf, billiards and chess. Isn't this ironic? This is where Bowling World Cup champion Christian Jan "CJ" Suarez, who was recently named Co-Athlete of the Year 2002 by the Philippine Sportswriters Association, bowling Hall of Famer Paeng Nepomuceno, US-based lady golfer Dorothy Delasin, billiards icon Efren "Bata" Reyes and chess grandmaster Eugene Torre have brought honors to the country.

I must emphasize that these athletes have no Olympics to look forward to, though no fault of their own. But despite this disadvantage, these non-Olympic achievers have been consistently recognized and honored here and abroad. To illustrate, four-time Bowling World Cup champion Nepomuceno earned a spot in the prestigious Guinness Book of World Records and the International Bowling Hall of Fame in St. Louis, Missouri. While Reyes was recently enshrined in the Billiards Congress of America Hall of Fame in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In the Philippines, Nepomuceno was named a record five-time PSA Athlete of the Year for his extraordinary achievements while Reyes and Delasin were also named PSA Athletes of the Year for their outstanding accomplishments in billiards and golf, respectively. Both Nepomuceno and Reyes are recipients of the highly valued Philippine Legion of Honor, aside from being honored by resolutions emanating from both Houses of Congress.

There should be no discrimination in sports. Fairness and equality must be applied to all deserving achievers, whose stirring victories in annual and biennial world and Asian tournaments inspire and unify the people no less than medals won in quadrennial competitions like the Olympics and Asian Games. A well-earned victory in a world-level championship should be recognized and treated just like an Olympic gold.

So that no athlete would be left behind, there is a need to file a bill in Congress to reward sports achievers in annual and biennial events. While the government and the Philippine Sports Commission headed by chair Eric Buhain provide incentives to achievers of annual and biennial world tournaments every time they return to the country, that is not enough. The incentives should be made permanent just like what is provided for in RA 9064 and not at the whim of whoever is head of the government or the PSC chair.

When the matches involving billiards champions Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante of Puyat Sports are featured by international cable TV like ESPN, as was the case during the 1999 World Pool Championship in Cardiff where Reyes won and in 2002 when a grieving Bustamante still placed second, millions of viewers all over the world saw for themselves that the Filipino athlete is a true sportsman, friendly and courteous; that he is second to no one in a sport that requires inborn talent, fierce determination and strong personal discipline to excel; that he could cope even with the most trying and difficult situations. The goodwill generated for this country is immeasurable. These athletes must therefore be rewarded for their sterling achievements, all the more so because their foreign trips and the wholesome media coverage have been at no cost to the government.

***

WHERE THE GOLDS ARE. Dance sport, now an official event in the 2005 SEA Games, which the country is hosting, is a rich source of gold medals. According to my research, Filipino dance athletes have always finished ahead of their Southeast Asian counterparts in many regional and international competitions. For example, in the most recent Manila IDSF (International Dance Sport Federation) Open-Pagoda Cup and seventh National Alaxan FR Championships, PSA awardees Reynato Rener Mercado, 14 years old, and Judity Anne Melencio, 13, won a total of three gold medals while another pair of young dance couples, Brian Joseph and Karla Ocana, shared stellar billing by also winning three golds in both the Latin and Standard categories, beating entries from Thailand and Singapore. And in the IDSF Asian Dancesport Championships held in Macau this month, the Filipino tandem of John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias finished second to a Chinese pair in the Youth Latin division, while totally outclassing dancers from Thailand who landed a poor fifth. Luis Miguel III and Luzviminda Artuz won the bronze medal in the Adult Latin category, finishing way ahead of their Singaporean rivals who placed fifth.

There are many medals at stake in dancesport competitions, which is heaven-sent because that will surely boost our quest for golds in the 2005 SEA Games. And, because of this, organizers of the coming SEAG should be thankful that it has in their fold the tireless Becky Garcia, longtime president of the Dancesport Council of the Philippines and chair of the POC education and culture commission.

***

EX-POC CHIEF WRITES. Former Philippine Olympic Committee president Julian Malonso faxed a press statement which read in part: President Macapagal-Arroyo is happy for the Philippines landing fourth in the last Southeast Asian Games. President Megawati Sukarno is ashamed of the third place Indonesian performance in the SEAG.

One of the reasons we participate in international competitions is to see how we compare with other countries. We should face reality. In reality we did not win. Let us not fool our people and use sports for political mileage in the coming elections—national as well as in sports elections.

By the way, I am not also happy although the Philippines surpassed the target of 40 gold medals in the last SEA Games. So what if we surpassed the target and won 48 golds to dislodge Malaysia from fourth place? What's the big deal about that? Did we win first place? There was no reason to celebrate. Or are we now celebrating mediocrity?

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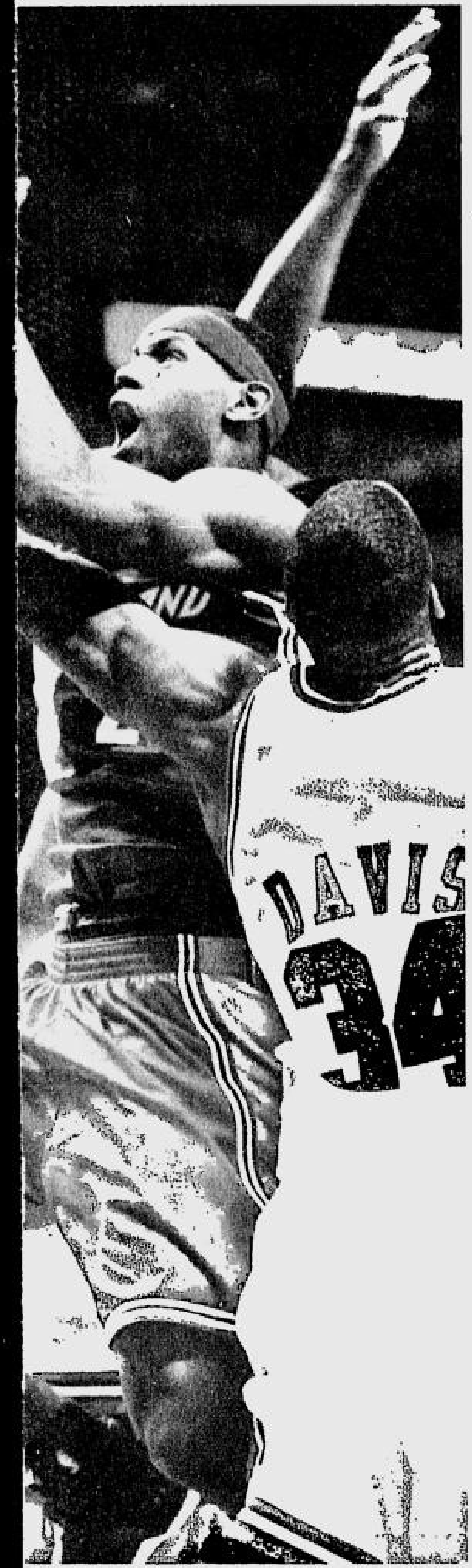


double-double game. REUTERS

NFL playoffs

hat the Bucs season. the year and ns that hadn't laughed at it.

is intercepted f, threw three touchdown passes in the fourth quarter. His final one, an 11-yard connection with Jameel Cook with 27 seconds, pulled the Bucs within 30-28.

But on the ensuing two-point conversion attempt, Johnson came under a ferocious blitz and had his pass batted down at the line of scrimmage. *AFP*

Klitschko kayoes Nicholson in 4th

KIEL, Germany—Wladimir Klitschko stopped Danell Nicholson in the fourth round Saturday, the second fight on the comeback trail for the former WBO champion.

The referee waved off the fight with 1 minute 16 seconds left in the round as Klitschko battered the American on the ropes after knocking him down a few seconds earlier.

Klitschko, 27, is the younger of the two fighting Ukrainian brothers, with brother Vitali also a top heavyweight contender.

KLITSCHKO

"It wasn't easy, but he moved a lot and it isn't easy to hit a moving target," said Klitschko (43-2, 39 knockouts). "But the important thing is it will continue for me and Vitali next year.

The two big brothers have made no secret of their goal to own heavyweight titles at the same time. But Wladimir Klitschko has to redeem himself first after losing his WBO title in stunning style in March, being demolished in two rounds by South African Corrie Sanders.

He began his comeback in August, knocking out hopelessly overmatched Argentine fighter Fabio Moli in 97 seconds, but his corner admitted his confidence had taken a big hit from the Sanders fight.

"No fighter gets knocked out for the first time in his career without losing confidence," said his co-trainer, Freddie Roach. "I hope Nicholson stands up for a few rounds, because its the only way he will get it back."

Nicholson (42-5, 32 knockouts) tied up the 6-foot-7 Klitschko at every chance from the opening seconds of the bout. He was penalized a point for holding in the second and warned again in the third.

The end came quickly as Klitschko knocked him into the ropes with a left hook in the fourth, then followed with some combinations. *AP*

Lonard captures Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia—Australian Peter Lonard won the Australian Open golf championship by a shot at Moonah Links south of here on Sunday.

Lonard beat compatriots Stephen Leaney and third-round leader Chris Downes.

Lonard shot a final round, 3-under par 69 to finish nine under for the championship 279.

With the championship in the balance, Lonard holed a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 18th leaving Leaney, playing in the group behind, needing to do the same from 18 feet to force a playoff.

Par was the best he could do, leaving Lonard with the title after rounds of 68-72-70-69.

Leaney carded rounds of 71-70-68-71 and Downes 67-70-71-72 for 8-under 280.

Starting the day, Downes led at eight-under by a shot from Leaney.

But the pressure told at the 11th hole where he blocked his tee shot at the par-three hole into the right rough and then miscued a chip.

His game then unraveled until he holed a long birdie putt at the last, leaving him on his overnight score.

At one stage of the final round, seven players held a share of the lead before Leaney broke the deadlock with a birdie at the par five 13th.

Lonard, whose near faultless play through the middle of his round got him to within striking distance, joined Leaney by rolling in a 3-m birdie putt at the 16th.

He then made a pressure par from the back of the 17th green before sealing victory at the final hole.

The victory earned Lonard US$200,000 and secured him the 2003 Australasian PGA Order of Merit crown. *AFP*

LONARD hits his approach to the 16th green. REUTERS

Dive instructor sets new world record

BANGKOK, Thailand—A British dive instructor finned his way to a depth of 313 m (1026.9 ft) off the Thai coast to set a new world record for the deepest scuba dive, a newspaper said Sunday.

Mark Ellyatt took 12 minutes to make his descent off the resort island of Phuket in southern Thailand on Thursday, besting the previous mark by 5 m (16.4 ft), according to the Phuket Gazette. He then needed six hours and 40 minutes to safely return to the surface.

"It's a lonely trip, like a trip to the moon," Ellyatt said.

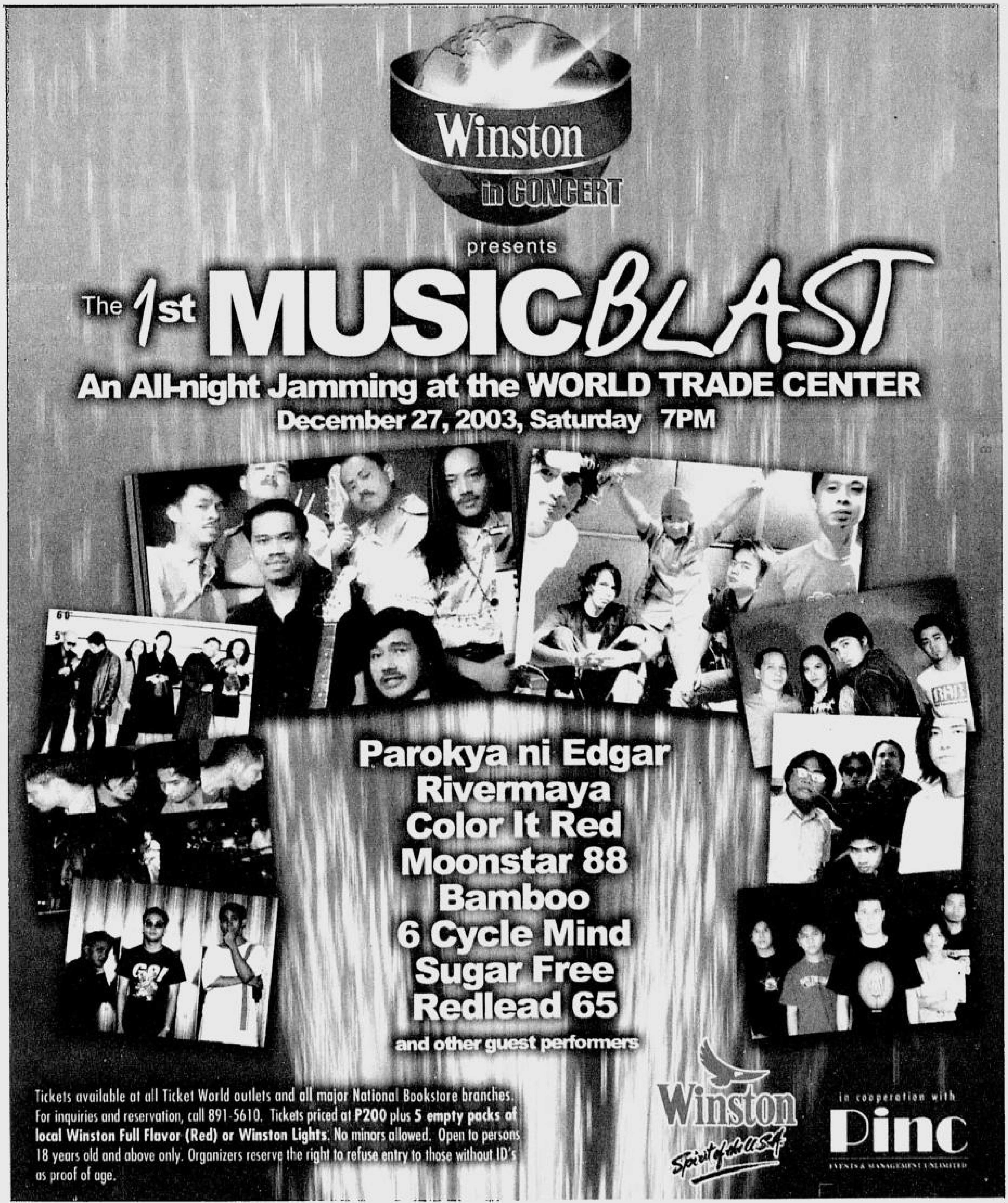
An independent verification of the record was not immediately available.

The previous world mark of 308 m (1010.5 ft) was set on Nov. 6, 2001 by British diver John Bennett off the island of Mindoro in the Philippines.

The depth of 305 m (1,000 ft) had long been regarded as a major barrier, the four-minute mile of scuba diving.

Ellyatt dived with six tanks and had another 24 brought down to him by support divers who met him at various stages of his ascent. Failure to ascend and decompress slowly on deep dives can result in decompression sickness or death.

Ellyatt, a technical instructor at a Phuket dive company, required emergency decompression treatment after a deep dive in February and a further three months to fully recover from the effects. *AP*



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ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	WAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 1
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	ASBOOBS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOST ISLAND
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORDS OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-1	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
CINEMA-4	COLD CREEK MANOR

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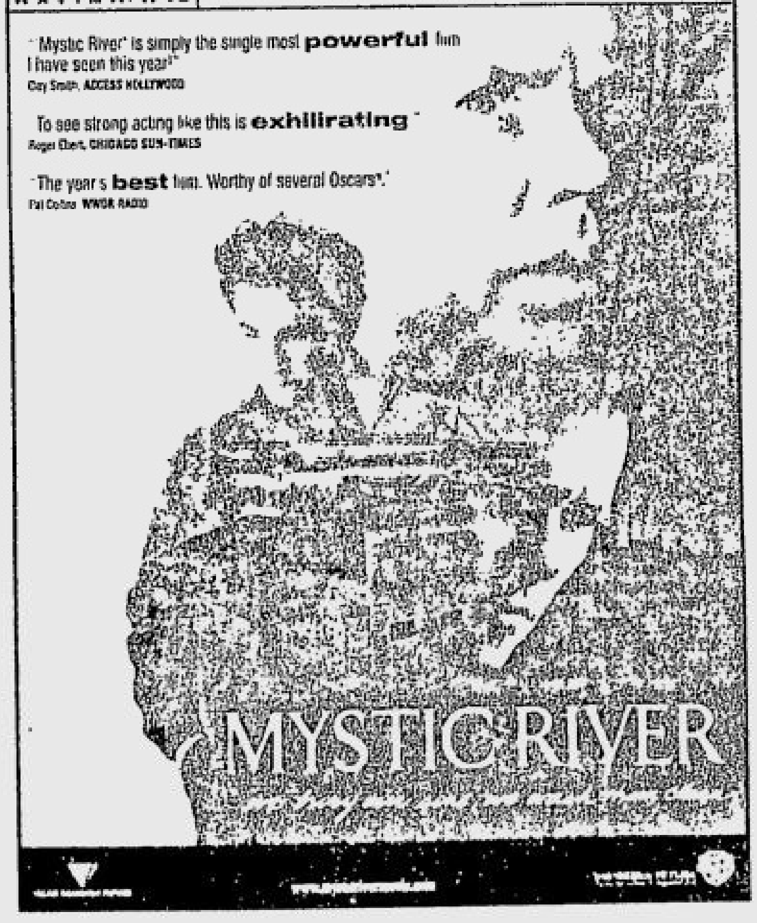

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2	LOST ISLAND	THE GRUDGE	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30	MYSTIC RIVER	
3	CABIN FEVER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30		GUARANTEED SEATS LORD OF THE RINGS 2 12:45 4:00 7:15 10:30	ELF
4	OUT OF TIME	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN		GUARANTEED SEATS THX INTOLERBALE CRUELTY 2:30 4:45 7:00 9:15 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS SCARY MOVIE 3 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30	UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
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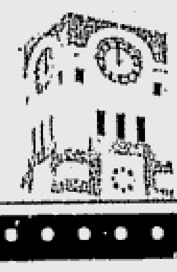

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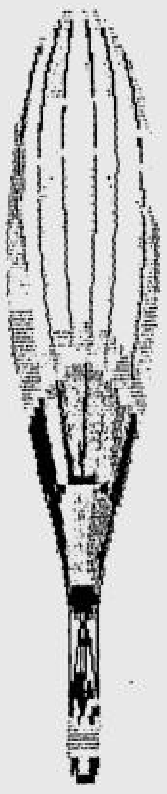

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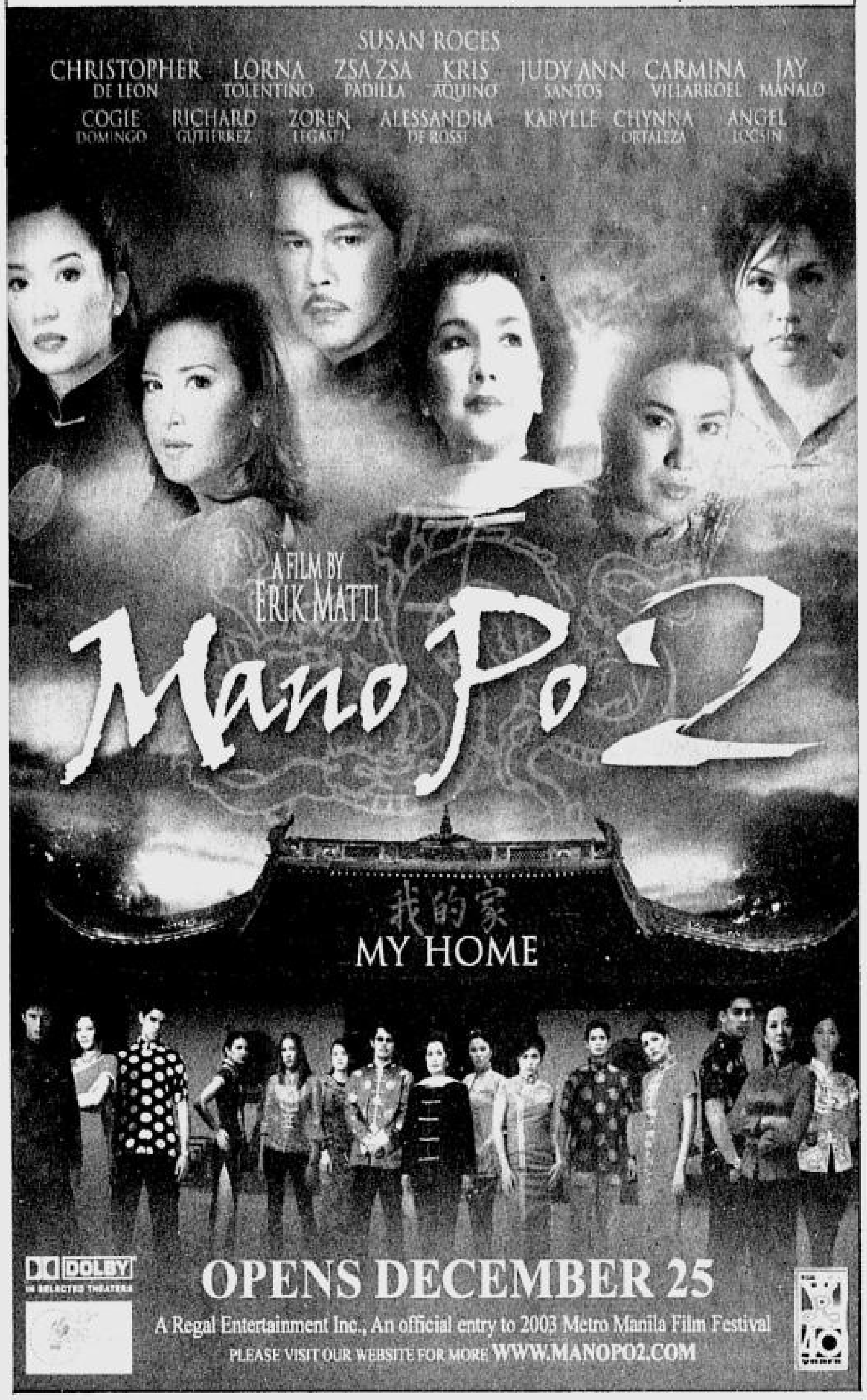

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OPENS DECEMBER 25

MJCI unwraps Yuletide racing extravaganza

FRESH off its recent blockbuster card at the San Lazaro Leisure Park (SLLP), the Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI) will close the year with a bang as it hosts a yearend extravaganza starting today until Dec. 31 at the country's newest and most modern horse racing complex in Carmona, Cavite.

The Jockey Club kicks off its busy Yuletide schedule with night racing today and tomorrow and a full card of at least 13 races each for Dec. 24, 26, 27 and 28.

No races have been scheduled on Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

"The MJCI management would like to extend its Yuletide greetings to all racing fans, as well as an invitation to take part in a grand yearend celebration at the only modern racing facility in the country," said Jockey Club vice president for corporate management Henri S. Kahn.

Highlight of the week's races is the P1.67-million Philracom Open Classic Championship, the last major racing event of the year, which is shaping up as a rematch of the top protagonists in the recent PCSO Presidential Gold Cup Race.

The rich event, open to both local and imported gallopers, will showcase the country's leading thoroughbreds in a classic 2,000-meter race.

The owner of the race winner pockets a cash prize of P1 million.

Heading the field are Gold Cup winner Red Star Rising and vanquished cup favorite West Bound, All-Import Stakes champion Catwalk Pia, veteran stakes campaigners Free Wind, Lyonnais, Diktador and Dandansoy, as well as classy imports Buena Sera, Real Slew and Royal Catch.

Red Star Rising is out to prove that his Gold Cup victory was not a fluke, while West Bound will seek revenge.

MJCI continues its racing schedule through Dec. 29, 31 and on Jan. 2, 3 and 4.

Ateneo, Claret, Harry Up lead early winners

FAVORITES Ateneo and Claret breezed past their respective opponents while unheralded Harry Up upset Lourdes-Quezon City Friday as the San Miguel Corp. Holiday Hoop Challenge got under way at the La Salle Greenhills gym in San Juan.

Ateneo routed archrival La Salle, 63-44, behind Andrew Felix's 18 points in the tournament sponsored by SMC and its major brands.

Dennis Suyosa topscored for the Green Archers with 15 markers

Ateneo duplicated the feat of Claret School, which earlier defeated Jesus De la Peña, 59-48, and Harry Up for the early lead in the 13-under division.

Harry Up, backed by Rep. Harry Angping, pulled the rug from under Lourdes-QC with a 79-50 decision after taking a comfortable lead at the half, 37-24.

Jason Espiritu led Claret with 20 points, while Patrick Esquivias topscored for Jesus De la Peña with 10.

In the 16-under play, San Beda routed Hoop It Up, 115-26, and Jose Rizal University won by walkover over Harry Up.

In other matches in the group, Mark Sarmiento hit 19 points as New Era walloped Veritas, 60-44, while Benedictine International School zapped St. Benedict, 67-40.

SMC All Stars team manager Manny Liwag did the ceremonial toss along with SMC All Stars project director and Philippine Basketball Association champion coach Eric Altamirano in the two-week age group tournament.

LATE-GAME action during the Ateneo-La Salle tussle in the SMC Holiday Hoop Challenge at the La Salle Greenhills Friday. The Blues prevailed, 63-44.

Maco High nips Bonifacio XI for Go-for-Goal title

DAVAO CITY—Compostela Valley's Maco National High came from behind to nose out Dipolog's Andres Bonifacio College, 2-1, and clinch the Mindanao Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football crown yesterday at the Tionko football field here.

Striker Jervie Paalan knocked in the winning goal in the 87th minute after teammate Zim Manique had knotted the count nine minutes earlier.

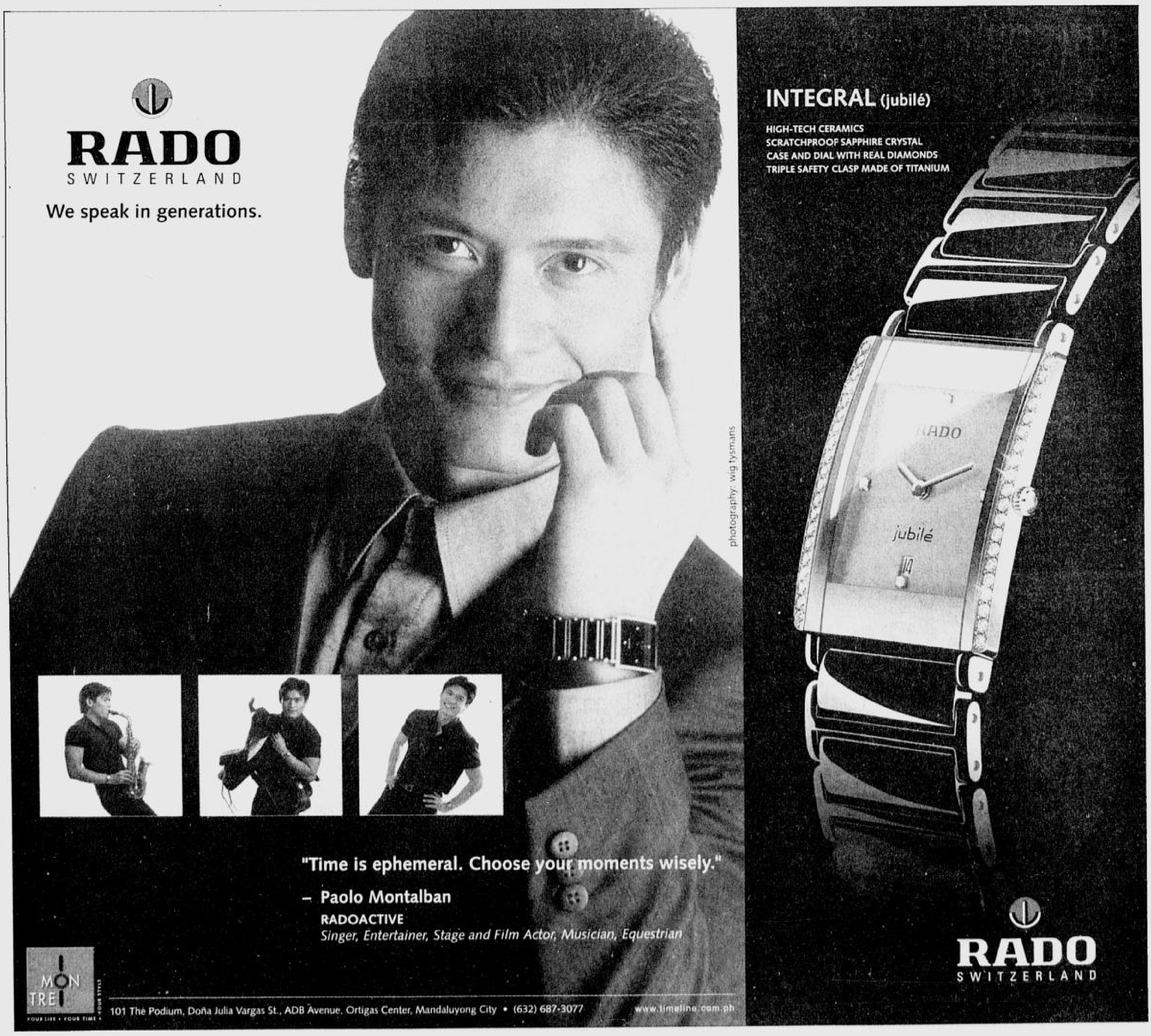
The Bonifacio College boys took the lead in the 12th on Edwin Enyidiado's marker and appeared set to bag the crown until Maco fought back with a torrid offensive led by Paalan and Manique.

South Cotabato's San Lorenzo Ruiz booters dumped host Emar Learning Center, 5-2, to finish third.

Zed Wendell Provido, Neil Brando Aguilar, Alfred Divino, Jessie Beatisula and Michael Parcon produced San Lorenzo's goals, while Clifford Dacera came through for Davao's twin markers.

Paalan was eventually named the tourney's most valuable player, while ABC took the Chris Monfort Fairplay Award in honor of the late former general secretary of the Philippine Football Federation.

Other individual awardees were Maco's Al-Adel Salida, best goalkeeper; Emar Learning Center's Dacera, best midfielder; ABC's Bryan Gumela, best defender, and SLR's Beatisula, best striker with five goals.



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Customs breaks all-time collection record

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday said it had exceeded the all-time record collection of the agency by raising P103.06 billion from tax and tariff payments as of Dec. 18.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo clarified that the agency's record collection posted in 1996 was actually P98.95 billion and not P104.57 billion as earlier reported.

Strong Customs collection helped the Macapagal administration contain the budget deficit this year.

Bernardo said more than P5 billion in non-cash collection was booked by the Customs in 1996 arising from tariff obligations of government agencies. This year, he said the Customs had about P10 billion in non-cash tax expenditure items that were not included in the collection record.

"This is the first time that the Customs, in its 101-year history, is actually breaching the P100-billion mark based on cash collection. We have set a new record for cash collections topping the 1996 level of P98.95 billion," Bernardo said.

The Customs chief said that if he would add the non-cash collection from government-importing agencies, then the collection level would already exceed P113 billion.

Bernardo said he was confident the bureau would meet its P8.1-billion target for the month because as of the Dec. 18, the Customs was more than P500 million ahead of the month-to-date goal.

"The month-to-date goal is usually a good indicator. We could already see from these daily numbers if we are ahead or behind the target," he explained.

As of Dec. 10, the bureau had already exceeded its full-year goal of P100.06 billion. Fees from other agencies as well as the Bureau of Treasury have also exceeded their full-year targets of P29.14 billion and P30.58 billion as of end-November.

The Customs bureau is the second-largest revenue agency of the government tasked to deliver about 17 percent of the annual income this year.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue must contribute 72 percent to state coffers or P424 billion. As of November, the BIR said it had collected P388.58 billion and had to collect at least P36 billion this month to meet the target.

Stronger collections this year had placed the budget deficit way below the target as of November. In the first 11 months, the gap between revenues and expenditures stood at P172.2 billion against a ceiling of P189.7-billion for the period.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the government would end the year with a deficit way below the P202-billion ceiling.

She said the government had a P30-billion headroom going into December. This month, the government spent an additional P5 billion to finance the P5,000 cash gift to a million state workers.

Amatong said that the government might even reduce the P197.8-billion deficit target next year.

"We can bring down the deficit target next year to consider the inflow from the Marcos wealth," she said. The government would use

CUSTOMS/ B3

RP gets $30-M ADB loan for low-cost housing

By Doris C. Dumlao

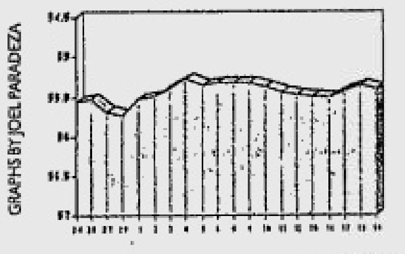
THE ASIAN Development Bank has approved a $30-million loan to help the government provide affordable housing to some 20,000 poor urban families outside Metro Manila.

The bank announced on Friday that the ADB's fresh package, which also comes with a separate $1.5-million technical assistance, will be executed with the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

This developed despite concerns from the bank that housing and land markets have not kept pace with rapid urban growth in the Philip-

RP/ B3

CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

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As of 5 p.m., Dec. 19, 2003

¥ 107.62 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 19, 2003

GOLD: **$408.10-408.60**
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 19, 2003

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks seen to rise

LOCAL stocks are seen to trade on the upside this shortened trading week still on the back of continued window-dressing and portfolio realignment as the New Year draws near.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.81 percent last week, the last full trading week prior to the Christmas holidays.

"Chartwise, Friday's close at 1422.24 continues to highlight that a near-term correction in prices is in progress. The recent rally experienced by the market has hit the upper band of our revised target range at 1,400," said Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas.

"Given that it closed near the highs indicate that a test of the 1,450 levels is still possible in the week ahead," Ravelas said.

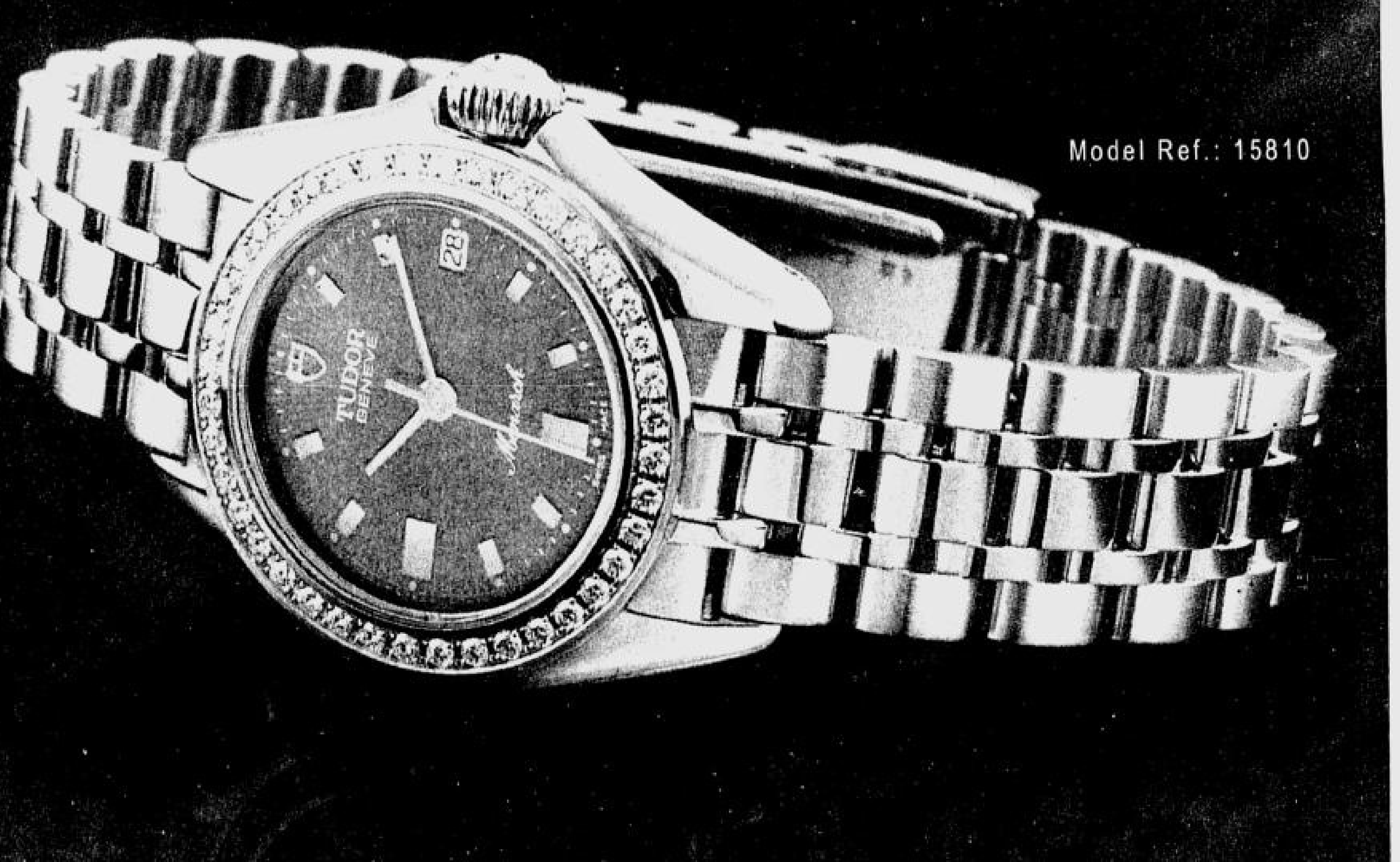
With only a few trading sessions remaining for the year, AB Capital Securities economist Jose Vistan said prices could just move sideways as investors await incentives to take position in the stock market.

"Bias could still be positive as window-dressing continues and seasonal factors come into play. Investors are aware that January usually brings in a flow of new money into the market," Vistan said.

"Fund managers will continue to strategically realign their portfolios before closing their books for the year. Traders may rotate their money out of many of the big winners of the year and move it to other issues that haven't had as much of a run-up," he explained.

If he were to value stocks based on

STOCKS/ B4



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- G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
- Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
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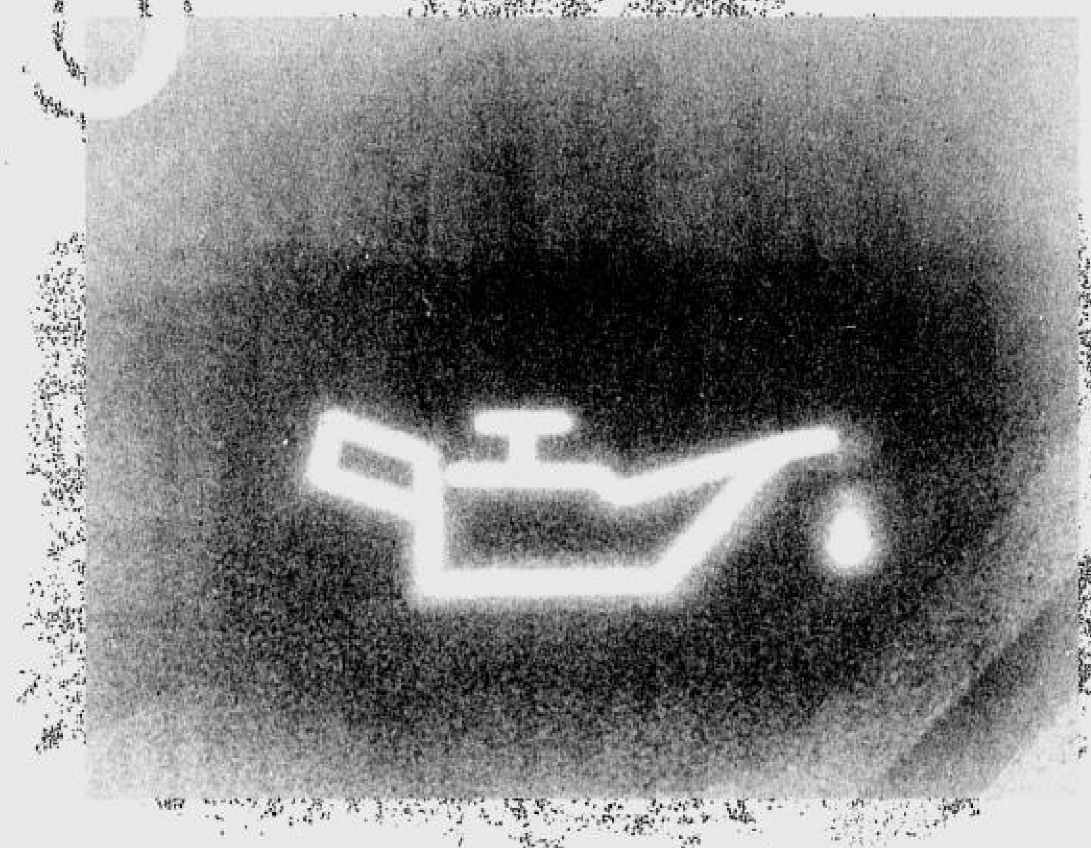

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Unjust once

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

EVERYBODY in the stock market looked at it as a big precedent-setting ruling by the Supreme Court, and not because the public lost a lot of money due to it.

The case involved a contract between the government firm PEA and the private entity Amari, which is now known as Cyberbay, a publicly listed company.

Eight years ago, they agreed on a reclamation project. Even without anybody asking for a ruling, the Supreme Court ruled it as against the Constitution.

That was 7 years later, and as you know, when it came to the Constitution, the words of the Supreme Court take the form of the 11th commandment.

* * *

NOW, as I said, Cyberbay was a publicly listed company. Thus, the ruling rendered thousands of stock investors broke.

Not only that, the ruling put fear of reclamation projects among investors, since it indicated that, as a rule, reclamation was against the Constitution.

It so happens that other multibillion-peso ventures were either ongoing or at the planning stage at that very same reclamation area.

Well, the project was at the Manila Bay on Roxas Boulevard. It was the site of other similar reclamation projects since Lapu-lapu still wore shortpants.

* * *

WHAT would happen now to the multibillion-peso projects under the urban renewal program of the government called Boulevard 2000?

Don't worry, from what I gathered, that supposedly monumental precedent-setting ruling of the Supreme Court applied only to Cyberbay and its stockholders.

It's that kind of "unconstitutional." You know—some sort of an exclusive unconstitutionality.

The unconstitutionality of it all, in other words, only applies once. The injustice which the Cyberbay stockholders felt, actually, does not apply to everybody.

One case in point is the reclamation project of the Renong group of Malaysia, which is right beside the Cyberbay area. That one was not ... well, "unconstitutional."

* * *

THAT MALAYSIAN group got a contract from the government for some 800-hectare reclamation project, which was exactly the same as Cyberbay's.

As if that was not enough, it also got a multibillion-peso contract for a tollway as part of the coastal highway.

To sweeten the deal some more, under this cute administration of Gloriaetta, the group received a government guarantee on a $200-million credit line.

It comes from the World Bank's International Finance Corp., or IFC, whose reputation in the local financial circles is not exactly lilywhite.

* * *

FROM what I heard, Gloriaetta herself worked on the IFC line during her latest trip to the United States.

In the stock market, as a matter of fact, speculation is ripe that the guarantee was one of the main reasons why Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho resigned.

Well, unlike Cyberbay, which had to advance a lot of money on the project, Renong did not spend a single centavo.

It just turned around and made money by selling the contract to a local group. For the Malaysian group, it was better than winning the lotto jackpot.

* * *

AND then this cute administration even granted the original Renong project a little sovereign guarantee, which was charged to—who else—the taxpayers!

If you were Camacho, you would resign, too. But that was still not the clincher.

That sale to the local group, in which the Malaysians made a killing, was the very reason why the project is exempted from the Supreme Court ruling. Beat that!

Word in the market is, the Supreme Court ruling, the one declaring a similar contract as unconstitutional, . does not apply to the Renong group. Wow!

* * *

IT SEEMS, based on word in the market, the Filipino group which bought the Renong contract was actually fronting for somebody else, who could be a foreigner.

Anyway, another bigtime reclamation project belongs to Federal Land, which I reported earlier wrote to the Supreme Court about its Cyberbay ruling.

My information is, Federal Land never had written communications with the Supreme Court, because it was confident about the legal status of its project.

Actually, the company acquired the reclaimed land through a bidding conducted by the Pasay City government.

The city, in turn, got the land as payment for taxes, which were owed by the original contractor of the reclamation, which should have been covered by the Supreme Court ruling just the same. Oops.

* * *

OTHER bigtime real estate ventures on the boulevard reclamation area belong to mall magnate Henry "Tatang" Sy of the SM group, and the Asiaworld project of the Tan Yu group.

Now, the question in the market is, are those projects also covered by the Supreme Court ruling? Are they also "unconstitutional?"

No, they are not, simply because the contracts were done a long time ago.

As for the reclamation projects in other parts of the country, such as those in Cebu City, well, they do not count. They are too far away from Metro Manila.

Really, they can always find a reason to exempt all other reclamation from that monumental precedent-setting Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of a purely economic deal entered into by the executive branch.

You know—any reason will actually do!

Banks' bad loans ratio rose to 15% in October

By Clarissa S. Batino

BANKS' bad loans ratio deteriorated anew in Oct. to 15.16 percent as the level of non-performing loans increased while credit slowed down as businesses held back expansion plans in light of political uncertainties.

NPLs of banks increased by 1.5 percent in October while total loan portfolio went down by 3 percent, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes.

As of September, the total bad loans stood at P249.15 billion while the loan portfolio was at P1.72 trillion. Credit growth was only at 0.8 percent in October from 3.9 percent a month ago.

Reyes pointed out that the NPL ratio as of October was substantially lower than the 16.36 percent a year ago.

"The bad loans ratio had improved due to a more aggressive collection of banks as well as restructuring. Individual sale of foreclosed assets also contributed to the year-on-year decline," the BSP deputy governor said.

Although banks' NPLs had declined from a peak of almost 19 percent almost two years ago, the central bank was still worried that lenders have not been taking full advantage of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act to reduce their bad loans and foreclosed assets. The SPV law, which provides tax incentives to NPL take-outs, will expire after April 2005.

Reyes said some banks have been selling their assets individually. He said about P6.2 billion of these types of disposal had been approved by the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the central bank..

A year ago, NPLs stood at P266.84 billion, an amount that already reflected the removal of roughly P30 billion in accounts that were fully written off, which the BSP allowed to be deducted from the bad loans portfolio starting September 2002.

Bad loans or NPLs are accounts whose principal or interests are unpaid for 90 straight days. Restructured loans of more than P130 billion are taken out of the NPL folder.

As of the third quarter, 12 of 41 commercial banks posted NPL ratios above the industry average. More notable were that of PNB at 50 percent of total loans, Prudential Bank at 38.26 percent, PBCom at 28.26 percent and Bank of Commerce at 27.68 percent.

Megaworld in Euromoney list of best-managed Asian firms

PROPERTY giant Megaword Corp. has been recognized as one of the best-managed companies in Euromoney's latest survey of top Asian companies.

Megaworld joined Bank of the Philippine Islands, Globe Telecom and SM Prime Holdings among the top-ranking Philippine companies. It was voted among the top four best-managed Asian property companies that included Sun Hung Kai Properties of Hong Kong and CapitaLand of Singapore.

For its eighth Asian Company ranking, Euromoney surveyed market analysis at major banks and research institutes in the region. Megaworld scored high in terms of market strength, profitability, growth potential and quality of management and earnings.

The Euromoney poll rated companies from the Philippines, Hong Kong, Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. The poll showed analysts favoring Asian firms that have established a good record in investor relations.

Megaworld had been recognized as one of the best-managed Asian companies by the FinanceAsia magazine in 2001. It ranked number one among Philippine companies in Euromoney's corporate governance survey of emerging markets this year.

Euromoney noted that Megaworld's standing as the country's foremost residential developer is built on a strong platform of professional management anchored on innovation, market focus and financial discipline.

Multimillion-peso bonuses

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

A LOT of grumbling in this season of good tidings is emanating from the boardrooms, griping about tough times. What you do not hear is that executive and boardroom compensation are singing the bottom-line blues away.

Take Benpres, the publicly listed Lopez holding company that lost P9.99 billion in 2001, P1.06 billion in 2002, and already P1.14 billion for the first nine months of the year.

Despite the spectacular losses—salesmen and everyday Joes get sacked for missing sales targets and quotas—the aggregate compensation for the CEO and four other officers increased from P12.3 million in 2001 to P13.7 million this year.

Benpres has only 23 full-time employees as of end-2002, but its officers and board compensation stayed at P32.2 million notwithstanding, or probably because of, the massive bleeding.

Patriarch Oscar Lopez and the rest of the family somehow make up for the modest package they receive at Benpres over at another family-controlled conglomerate, the money-spinning First Philippine Holdings.

Lopez and four other senior officers of the power conglomerate are estimated to receive this year P45.32 million in compensation plus P8.53 million in bonuses. A year before, the five had actually received P30.07 million in compensation plus P44.965 million in bonuses.

The kicker is that the First Philippine bylaws allow up to ¾ of one percent of net earnings to be distributed as directors' bonuses.

Despite the Supreme Court setback over the multibillion-peso Meralco refund, First Philippine posted P1.96 billion in net earnings in 2002, entitling the board to P14.7 million in extra compensation. Still, the Lopez-dominated board declared only a total of P10.4 million as bonus for themselves.

A year before, First Philippine's net was P3.9 billion, which should have had entitled the 15 board members to a P29.25-million windfall versus the P8.999 million that was actually given.

Over at the Zobels' holding company, Ayala Corp., total compensation excluding stock options for president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II and the four top executives steadily increased from P75.26 million in 2001 to P78.44 million in 2002 even while the conglomerate's profits skidded from P5.11 billion in 1999 to P2.39 billion in 2002.

Despite restructuring in 2002, where total number of employees was slashed to 122 from 199 a year before, aggregate compensation for Ayala Corp. managers and senior officers is projected to increase this year to P165 million from P150 million in 2002.

Assuming a 1:3 officer-employee ratio, Ayala Corp. would have about 31 officers receiving a theoretical average of P5.32 million pay package a year.

If that is hardship pay, take a look at how the more profitable public companies are rewarding their top executives.

ABS-CBN, the Lopez broadcast company known for industry-setting salaries, president Federico Garcia and four top executives are set to receive about P72 million in total compensation this year from P68.2 million last year, despite the broadcast giant's net income stumbling to P166 million from P1.38 billion in profits in 2001.

ABS-CBN is optimistic its fortunes would turn around this year and return to the P1-billion net income level.

Even Garcia seems to be riding the turnaround; from the end-2002 holdings of 140,105 shares, the outgoing president's ABS-CBN portfolio has grown to 226,207 shares as of the third quarter of this year. At Friday's close of P25/share, that is still about P5.6 million.

Over at Bank of Philippine Islands, the projected compensation package this year for president Xavier Loinaz and four other senior officers is P87.4 million or P17.4 million each, if we assume Loinaz gets the same pay as the four others below him.

In addition, Loinaz has retained, mostly through a stock option plan, 279,370 shareholdings in BPI as of end-September. That block is worth over P12.8 million as of Friday's close. (Loinaz has been whittling down his BPI holdings; his end-2002 portfolio totaled 472,657 shares).

At the closely held Allied Bank, taipan Lucio Tan's vice chair Willy Co, president Reynaldo Maclang, and two other senior officers will this year receive a more modest P22 million for all four of them. But then again, Allied Bank's net income for 2002 is P1 billion compared to BPI's P5.173 billion for the same year.

Still, Allied Bank allows up to 5 percent of the year's net earnings—that's P50 million out of P1 billion—to be distributed among the directors as yearend bonus. No wonder BPI wanted to adjust the P1.7-million compensation each board member received in 2001.

Because of its sheer size, San Miguel Corp. easily tops them all.

For managing the country's largest food, beverage, and packaging conglomerate, chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., president Ramon Ang, and eight other senior officers will receive a total of P178 million in combined salaries, bonuses and "others." That's P17.8 million each, assuming The Boss is paid as the rest of the senior executives.

Our Friday's item about the amount of bonus of the San Miguel board is entitled to had been understated, according to the grapevine.

The 15-member board is actually allowed to claim as bonus 2 percent of gross, not net as had been reported, income from profits "after (deducting) general expenses, remuneration to officers and employees, depreciation on buildings, machinery, transportation units, furniture and other properties."

Last year, San Miguel posted P12.39-billion income after such deductions. Two percent of that is P247.84 million.

Heard through the grapevine

COMMISSIONER Antonio Bernardo has decided to stay on as Customs chief and will no longer run, in what could have been his third attempt, for congressman of Mandaluyong.

His bureau has already collected more than P103 billion in duties as of Dec. 18, surpassing its full-year target and even the record 1996 collections of P98.95 billion.

It also marks the first time in the history of the 101-year-old agency to breach the P100-billion collection level.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

RP gets $30-M ADB loan . . .

From page B1

pines, where half of the population now lives in urban areas. This figure is expected to reach 60 percent by 2010.

"Access to land is a key constraint in housing the urban poor," said Michael Lindfield, an ADB senior housing finance specialist.

"Market-based approaches must be found to close the gap between demand and supply, and to enable the sector to provide low-cost housing, financing, sites, and services."

More than 40 percent of urban families reportedly live in makeshift dwellings in informal settlements.

The six-year project will be patterned after ADB's pilot projects for the urban poor in Payatas and Muntinlupa (both in Metro Manila), which have been successful in community mobilization, shelter/ infrastructure provision and financing, as well as livelihood support.

The ADB loan accounts for 62.5 percent of the total project cost of $48.8 million.

The LGUs will shoulder $6.3 million while the national government will provide $3.5million, mainly through contribution of government-owned land. Several co-financiers intend to partner with ADB to enhance the capacity- building component.

Customs . . .

From page B1

more than $700 million in ill-gotten Swiss deposits of the Marcos family to finance projects in agrarian reform starting next year.

This month, the government must generate at least P51 billion in revenues and limit expenditures to about P63 billion to hit the deficit target of P12.3 billion.

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Economic platforms

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

AMONG the first things people want to hear from each presidential candidate is their economic platform, or what they perceive to be the highest priorities in managing our economy and how they propose to address them.

Don't expect to see a wide variation in what the candidates have to say on this, as one need not be an economist to see what our most pressing economic problems are.

Where each candidate will differ would be in specific measures they would take to pursue the same objectives, and more importantly, how faithful and consistent they will be in carrying out what they promise to do.

Three C's of a good president

This is where the quality of personal judgement of the president will be the determining factor. There is no doubt that whoever wins the presidency will receive the best advice on the proper approach to our economic problems, whether solicited or unsolicited, and will receive it from various sources from varying persuasions.

But ultimately, it is the president's own personal judgement that will determine whose advice she/he trusts and listens to, accordingly translating it into actual policy and government action. For this, the president's character, competence and charisma will be most critical.

Character determines whether the economic policy decisions made by the president will be ultimately motivated by the greatest good for the greatest number of Filipinos, or will simply promote or protect her/his own vested interests and that of a favored few.

In the end, this is what did the Estrada presidency in, and the country paid dearly for it.

There is a public and a private face to any person's character, and character flaws are quite easy to discern from a person's public behavior. On this basis alone, it should be fairly easy for most of us to dismiss certain presidential wannabes outright for apparent lack of the needed character for the job.

For those who do appear to have good character, it is harder for the voting public to tell whether what they see is what they will get, as this requires a more intimate knowledge of the person.

Assuming the right character, competence in turn determines how well the president, as the ultimate decision-maker, can tell which one among the range of advice she/he will receive on every issue will truly promote the greatest good for the greatest number.

The right competence is also needed to know which policies are consistent and not at cross-purposes with one another. This is where training in economics, or at least some minimum technical understanding of it, is important—and I stress economics, not just business.

It is not enough that one has had experience in running or working within a business enterprise to run the entire country and its economy. What is good for business will not necessarily be good for the economy as a whole. That is why the study of economics in schools is quite distinct from the study of business management, or even business economics.

No specific constituency

I had time and again pointed this out to explain why the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) often must take policy positions contrary to that of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Agriculture (DA) and other sectoral departments.

The DTI secretary worries about the welfare of traders and industrialists; the DA secretary worries about the welfare of farmers; the BSP governor and the finance secretary worry about the stability and welfare of the financial sector; and so on. And each of them tend to think that their constituency is the most important to keep the economy in good shape.

On the other hand, the Neda secretary is the economic manager who does not have a specific constituency, but whose constituency, like that of the president, is the entire Filipino people. For her/him, policy decision-making is a perennial balancing act.

Unfortunately for the Neda secretary, the wider majority of the people whose interests she/he must serve are also invariably a silent majority. Thus, the position often appears unpopular and subject to loud criticisms from specific sectoral interest groups.

This is perhaps the reason why next to lawyers, economists often become the objects of much derision. Even the current Neda secretary would rather not be identified as an economist, and prefers to describe himself as a finance man.

And yet the job precisely requires and has traditionally been given to someone with formal and advanced training in economics, rather than business management or finance.

Charisma and economics

The third C the president must have is charisma, the ability to attract people and muster their support. The failed President was clearly well endowed with this, as were our most effective past presidents.

This trait is likewise critical because decision-making toward the greatest good for the greatest number often requires convincing vocal sectoral interests to accept unpalatable policy options.

It also requires convincing winners to share part of their gains to compensate the outnumbered losers from such decisions, for win-win solutions will often not be possible.

Indeed, this is one of the more challenging aspects of the job. Many of my colleagues in the academe decided to support the Estrada campaign in 1998 based on this asset.

Seeing him as not having the required technical competence in economics, they felt that he could at least be given the proper technical advice. And with his strong charisma, they saw him as the best President to push for the right economic policies, many of which tend to be unpopular.

What they failed to consider was the importance of the other C. Clearly, all three Cs must come together in our nation's leader if we are to break away from our perennial economic difficulties. Two out of three simply isn't good enough. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

BIR to grant tax exemptions to Japanese Subic contractors

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has agreed to grant tax privileges to Japanese firms that will develop the port and implement environmental management projects in the Subic freeport zone.

In a memorandum of agreement signed with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, the BIR agreed to exempt the winning Japanese contractors for the Subic Bay Port Development Project and the Subic Bay Freeport Environment Management Project from paying the 10-percent value added tax.

This is in support of SBMA's efforts to further develop Subic as one of the country's economic hubs.

The BIR shall issue tax credit certificates to the winning Japanese contractors, allowing them to refund the input VAT they will pay for services or items they will acquire for the Subic projects.

In addition, the winning Japanese contractors and their Japanese suppliers of products and services will be exempted from the payment of income tax.

However, third-party suppliers with no direct business relationship with the SBMA will not be covered by the VAT exemption.

The BIR agreed to grant the tax incentives to the Japanese firms partly because these development projects in Subic will be financed by a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

JBIC approved the loan for the Subic Bay Port Development Project in August 2000, while the loan for the Subic Bay Freeport Environment Project was approved last March.

The SBMA may soon award the contract for the port development project to Shimitsu-Penta Ocean-Toa consortium after it submitted last week the lower bid price of P5.2 billion, against the P5.59 billion offered by the other bidder Toyo Corp.

The Subic Bay Port Development Project, the construction of which is expected to begin in April next year, is part of the long-term development plan of the SBMA and the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) for Central Luzon.

SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo said the Subic Bay port is expected to encourage the entry of more foreign investments and further boost economic activity in the area.

Through infrastructure development and entry of more foreign investments in Subic and surrounding areas, SBMA and BCDA hope to make Central Luzon a major economic site outside Metro Manila.

CA clears nickel plant

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE COURT of Appeals has dismissed charges that the $100-million Rio Tuba nickel processing plant in Palawan would cause environmental damage in the area.

The nickel processing plant was 75 percent complete when environmental groups questioned the project claiming that the plant could generate high acid deposits that would damage the surrounding areas.

The plant is owned by a joint venture between Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. of Japan and Rio Tuba Mining Co.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Horace Ramos, however, said that the CA decision indicated that the mine has not violated any environmental laws, thus, construction could continue.

The plant was expected to be in full commercial operation next year.

The proposed Rio Tuba plant would process nickel from laterite ore with a nickel grade of 1.2 percent to 2 percent.

The planned plant is expected to process about 10,000 metric tons of nickel and 550 metric tons of cobalt per year for 20 years.

Rio Tuba currently exports its higher nickel grade ore deposits to Japan and Australia.

The estimated nickel ore output this year is 819,000 dry metric tons, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

WEAK PESO, RISING OIL PRICES

Inflation seen at 3.3% in Dec.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S average consumer prices would likely rise by 3.3 percent this December due to the weakening peso and rising oil prices.

Dubai oil prices reached $27.66 per barrel as of end-November compared to $24.33 in the same period last year while the exchange rate averaged at P54.09, weaker than the P51.60 last year.

The peso even hit its record low of 55.85 in Nov. 27 when actor Fernando Poe Jr. announced that he would join the presidential race.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri told reporters that these two factors likely kept the inflation rate this month at the same level as in November, a slight increase compared to the 3.1 percent in October.

The country's 11-month inflation rate has so far averaged at 3.1 percent, far below the government's target of 4.5-5.5 percent for this year.

Scholastica Cororaton, National Economic and Development Authority director for research and planning, said that election spending expected in the first half next year was not expected to significantly affect inflation targets.

The government has set a 4-5 percent inflation target for 2004.

Neri said crude prices were expected to ease to $23.86 per barrel next year but risks remained that these prices would rise higher than expected.

On the other hand, the exchange rate was expected to remain weak, moving within a range of between 54 and 56 to the dollar.

With the weak currency, interest rates may inch up next year from this year's average of 6 percent.

NERI

The bellwether 91-day Treasury bill rate next year is expected to average at 7.5-8.5 percent, based on government projections.

Analysts do not expect any monetary tightening until next year, as the presidential elections are seen to trigger consumerist spending sprees.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had earlier said that its Monetary Board might raise its overnight interest rates by 50 basis points in 2004 if the US Federal Reserve implements a rate hike of as much as one percentage point.

The BSP's overnight rates currently stands at 6.75 percent for borrowing and 9 percent for lending, the same level since August this year.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 19, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	5,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17.5	17	17.5	6,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46	46.5	45.5	46	732,300
Citystate Savings Bank	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	2,800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	34	34	3,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.51	0.53	3,200,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27	26.5	26.5	339,000
Philippine National Bank	25	25	24.75	24.75	28,000
Security Bank Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	14,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	5,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.22	2.3	2.22	2.3	30,000
Bankard Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	5,000
First Abacus Financial	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,800,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	150	179	150	179	350
Manulife Financial Corp.	1710	1710	1710	1710	310
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1310	1310	1310	1310	1,430
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25.5	25	25	18,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.69	70,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	825	850	825	850	80,460
Ipeople Inc.	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.92	110,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	1,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.89	0.91	0.89	0.91	9,990,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	920	945	920	930	108,370
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	16,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	15	14.75	14.75	173,800
Manila Electric Co. B	24	24	24	24	2,189,200
Petron Corp.	2.2	2.22	2.2	2.22	2,610,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.94	440,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	470,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	1,225,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	370,000
Supercity Rlty Dev. Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	313,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	43,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	752,900
RFM Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	240,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54	53.5	54	9,700
San Miguel Corp. B	62.5	63	62.5	63	3,500
Universal Robina Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	21,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	420,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	190,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	20,000
Ayala Corp.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.3	6,478,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	200,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	600
A. Soriano Corp.	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.84	490,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	3,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.48	6,370,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.115	0.145	0.115	0.145	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,200,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	170,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	18.75	363,700
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	900,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2	2	2	2	53,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100,000
Medco Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	2,770,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	2,950,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	560,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.75	13	12.75	13	339,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.56	850,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	450,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25	25.5	25	25	261,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	1,300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.9	7	6.7	6.9	31,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6	6.1	6	6	4,808,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	40,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	3,080,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	50,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	30,000
SM Development Corp.	1.02	1.1	1	1.1	242,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	4,871,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	100,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	12,620,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	600,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	2,040,000
OIL					
Imperial Res	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	152,000,000

CURRENCIES

December19, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.804246421	1.000000	55.337000
Japan	Yen	0.007479	0.009300	0.514600
United Kingdom	Pound	1.426492	1.773700	98.151200
Hongkong	Dollar	0.103579	0.128790	7.126900
Switzerland	Franc	0.643964	0.800705	44.308600
Canada	Dollar	0.60506	0.752332	41.631800
Singapore	Dollar	0.471699	0.586510	32.455700
Australia	Dollar	0.595606	0.740576	40.981300
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.133336	2.652590	146.786400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.21446	0.266660	14.756200
Brunei	Dollar	0.470319	0.584795	32.360800
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020319	0.025265	1.398100
UAE	Dirham	0.218979	0.272279	15.067100
Euro	Euro	1	1.243400	68.806000
Argentina	Peso	0.271247	0.337268	18.663400
Brazil	REAL	0.27458	0.341413	18.892800
Denmark	Kroner	0.13433	0.167026	9.242700
India	Rupee	0.017711	0.022022	1.218600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.211661	0.263179	14.563500
Mexico	New Peso	0.07159	0.089015	4.925800
New Zealand	Dollar	0.520683	0.647417	35.826100
Norway	Kroner	0.119752	0.148900	8.239700
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014065	0.017489	0.967800
South Africa	Rand	0.121418	0.150971	8.354300
Korea	Won	0.000676	0.000840	0.046500
Sweden	Kroner	0.110316	0.137167	7.590400
Syria	Pound	0.018175	0.022599	1.250600
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023689	0.029455	1.630000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000504	0.000627	0.034700

Stocks seen to rise

From page B1

next year's projected earnings, Vistan said it would seem that stocks still have some upside.

"However, some stocks have run up so fast that there are investors who are worried that stock-price growth may be getting ahead of profit growth. The surge in share prices this year also means that it's tougher to find bargains," he said.

"Investors are advised to pocket some gains as domestic politics remains as a potential excuse for profit takers to pull down the market," he said.

Most of the buying activities last week were centered on the major telecommunication companies which reported strong earnings this year and are projected to sustain its growth next year.

Developments in Iraq which led to the capture of strongman Saddam Hussein likewise contributed to the positive sentiment last week. However, gains were tempered by concerns over a possible recurrence of killer virus SARS.

BPI Securities said the market sustained the breakout past the 1400 psychological resistance and was on its way to test the 1,430 high for the year.

"If it establishes a new high for the year, this would be bullish for the market," it said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

DA expects RP to achieve rice sufficiency in '04

LORENZO

By Christine A. Gaylican

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. believes the country will be able to attain self sufficiency in rice next year despite the budgetary constraints that the agency is facing.

Reacting to skeptics who claimed that the country's rice production next year might not still be enough to feed the population, Lorenzo said production would be enough to meet 97-100 percent of the requirement.

"We had a better-than-expected palay production this year, especially this fourth quarter, and this will be carried on until next year," Lorenzo said in a dialogue with the DA employees Friday.

Lorenzo said the government's intensive seed distribution program combined with adequate irrigation and an expected favorable weather condition until the end of this year would all contribute to a good rice production performance that could exceed last year's performance by 190,000 metric tons.

However, some agricultural economists are less optimistic of the Philippine rice production prospect in 2004.

University of the Philippines economist Arsenio Balisacan said a rice self-sufficiency might not be achievable with the very low budget (P15.1 billion) allocated to the agriculture department for 2004. The amount is P5.7 billion short of the agency's proposed budget.

"Rice self-sufficiency may not be possible at this time. The government must have the resources to do that. The problem is that the DA has to contend with a meager budget to pursue its projects," said Balisacan.

Balisacan noted that the government could subsidize the production inputs of the farmers given the limited budgetary allocation.

University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP) professor Rolando Dy agreed in another interview that the lack of resources might block the DA efforts of achieving a 97-100 percent sufficiency in rice by next year.

Analyst Pablito Villegas said in a separate briefing that given the lack of government funding for initiatives and projects in agriculture, the concept of self-sufficiency might not be realized in the near term.

Who says FPJ is a shoo-in?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

A LOT of people think Fernando Poe Jr. is a shoo-in as the next president of the country. He will enter Malacañang in triumph on the shoulders of the dumb masses. Really?

FPJ is running for office for the first time in his life. There have been notable flops among movie people running for office for the first time. The comedian Bert Marcelo could not laugh his way into the governor's office in Bulacan; Obet Pagdanganan's formidable figure could not be budged. Edu Manzano could not crack Jejomar Binay's stranglehold on Makati. Sonny Belmonte clobbered Rudy Fernandez for the mayor's seat of Quezon City. Nora Aunor could not sing her way to the governor's office of Camarines Sur; Louie Villafuerte, who could not carry a tune, stood in the way. Philip Salvador ran for a seat in the Mandaluyong council; when the results were in, his name was nowhere to be seen.

Of course, there have been notable hits. But they did not win solely on their popularity. Malonzo beat Asistio who had lost the support of Caloocan voters. Joey Marquez, with Alma Moreno by his side, won when Parañaque voters turned away from Olivares. Without meaning to take anything away from Vilma Santos, she won because Lipa City is her husband's bailiwick.

How about the biggest success story of all, Erap's landslide victory in 1998? Can FPJ replicate the feat?

Surely, Erap was extremely popular. But by the time he ran for president, he was already a veteran campaigner. He had campaigned nationwide twice, when he ran for the Senate and for the vice presidency. Speaking in Tagalog, few could match him. In 1998, he tirelessly campaigned all over the country.

Estrada's performance was all part of a brilliant strategy mapped out by campaign manager Orly Mercado and image-maker Reli German. That strategy was anchored on the battle cry, "Erap para sa mahirap." His forays into the provinces looked spontaneous but were carefully staged and scripted. He ate with his hands before adoring crowds. His fractured English made him one of the unwashed and uneducated. So what if he was a philanderer? The crowd loved him for it. Above all, his campaign was well funded. Herding the dumb masses into the voting booths cost a hell of a lot of money.

Also, Erap's strongest opponent, Jose de Venecia, backed by FVR, ran an incredibly inept campaign. FVR had dissipated his support with the absurd signature campaign to amend the Constitution so he could run again. Then, there was his long list and then the short list of candidates. In the end, FVR anointed JDV. (Did you hear the story that JDV got the nod because he knew where all the bodies were buried?)

And, what was their campaign line? That JDV was the best man to carry on FVR's economic policies. JDV was like a life insurance agent who had to sell to the prospective buyer not only the policy but also the company.

The 2001 presidential results were as much a terrible loss for FVR and JDV as it was a great landslide victory by Erap.

Can FPJ match Erap's campaign performance? At this late hour, FPJ cannot even get started. He has yet to come out with his own battle cry.

He announced his candidacy at Manila Hotel. There were no thousands upon thousands of adoring fans. The Fiesta Pavilion was full (I was there), but it was the crowd of the annual businessmen's convention. FPJ tried to crash in and was stopped cold at the door.

His next foray was into a forum on globalization and trade liberalization by the communist fringe groups at UP Diliman. He ran away like a scared rabbit.

There are no fawning multitudes dogging FPJ. Even during his proclamation (where he was a no-show) there was no crowd. If there had been, the papers would have shown it. FPJ is still looking for a crowd to call his own.

What about FPJ's high rating? Ernie Maceda's advance copy of a survey showing FPJ's rating of 44 percent was totally repudiated by Pulse Asia. And whatever rating FPJ has today will crumble before Ate Glo's expected onslaught.

Finally, under the constitutional one-term limit, there are no incumbent presidents running for reelection. But, by a quirk of fate, Ate Glo is a sitting president in next year's presidential campaign. The equity of the incumbent is a powerful campaign asset. Ate Glo will be a formidable opponent to a candidate running for office for the first time.

FPJ doesn't stand a ghost of a chance. And I have a case of beer on the line to back up this fearless forecast.

RP, Romania sign trade pact

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES has entered into an agreement to boost trade ties with Romania, paving the way for more trade opportunities in the Eastern European region for local industries, the Department of Trade and Industry said

Trade and Industry Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal Jr., who also acts as officer-in-charge of the trade department following the resignation of former Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, said in a statement that the agreement between the two countries would be fulfilled by closer interaction among their business chambers and industries.

The agreement was forged during the 10th RP-Romania Joint Economic Commission (JEC), which was held in Manila on Dec. 8 and 9.

Under the agreement, the two countries vowed to focus on the agriculture sector through the promotion of each other's agricultural products and by sharing knowledge on the enhancement and use of agricultural science and technology.

The bilateral agreement also includes the crafting of a framework cooperation agreement, in which governments of the two countries will tap insurance and guarantee facilities for exporters.

The agencies that will be tapped to provide support services to exporters are Philexim of the Philippines and Eximbank of Romania.

"Our dynamic and pioneering private sector plays a critical role in promoting bilateral and economic relations," said in a statement by Trade and Industry Undersecretary Thomas Aquino, adding the JEC will be the main vehicle for the facilitation of the two countries' efforts to boost trade ties.

During the JEC, the Philippines expressed intention to source irrigation equipment from Romanian suppliers, and to conduct a joint research on the genetic improvement of water buffalo for better milk quality.

Philippine representatives also sought Romania's know-how in dairy production, packaging and marketing.

Wider gin market study sought

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. (GSMI) is asking rival Tanduay Distillers Inc. (TDI) to expand the scope of a gin market study conducted by AC Nielsen, which showed that gin drinkers could tell the difference between the Ginebra San Miguel product and the newly launched TDI Ginebra Kapitan.

GSMI legal counsel Gilbert Reyes of the Poblador, Bautista and Reyes Law Offices said "for the AC Nielsen study or any market study to be meaningful, it must confront the question of whether the respondents are able to correctly identify who the manufacturer of the gin product is."

Reyes said he believed that "if AC Nielsen is asked to widen its probe and pose the question, the results would most likely be similar to the earlier study done by Philippine market research leader Mercedes Abad."

GSMI earlier released the result of the Abad study which showed that most gin drinkers associate the word "Ginebra" with the original product and its manufacturer GSMI, its predecessor La Tondeña or mother company San Miguel Corp.

The Abad study also showed that most gin drinkers tended to believe mistakenly that Ginebra Kapitan was manufactured by GSMI, La Tondeña or SMC.

Kapitan is actually manufactured by TDI and not GSMI, Reyes added.

Reyes said the conclusion of the AC Nielsen study that "most gin drinkers can tell the difference between Kapitan and Ginebra San Miguel is meaningless, incomplete, even misleading." The real issue here is that most gin drinkers wrongly think GSMI is the maker of Kapitan, he pointed out. TDI must demonstrate that gin drinkers not only correctly identify which is Kapitan and which is Ginebra San Miguel but more importantly, that the ordinary gin drinker knows and believes that Kapitan is actually manufactured by TDI and not GSMI, Reyes added.

Tobacco farmers seek gov't support

SAN MANUEL, Tarlac—There is hardly any tobacco planted this season in this town, Tarlac's "tobacco country."

Reeling from last year's crash in local tobacco farming that left farmers deep in debt and sent more than a P100 million worth of tobacco leaves down the drain, farmers here are seeking government support so they can shift away from this centuries-old "sin crop."

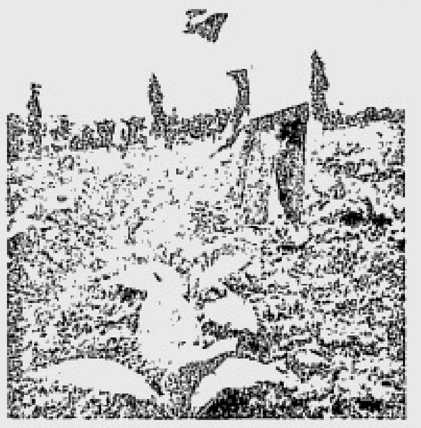
But technicians from the National Tobacco Administration office here were reportedly still encouraging them to continue planting tobacco.

Mayor Reynaldo Malazo said there was no way NTA technicians here could persuade farmers into planting tobacco again unless there was a guarantee that their produce would be bought at harvest time.

If the switch from tobacco to corn would continue, Malazo said the NTA would lose its relevance. "That is probably their fear," he said.

To the farmers who claim to be victims of NTA's alleged inefficiency, last year's experience was a bitter lesson. They said they have lost confidence in NTA's ability to support them in times of crisis.

Farmer Lito Adan, 54, said farmers started planting tobacco several years ago because they were encouraged by the government to do so. But if tobacco is considered a "sin crop," Adan said the government should support them so they could shift to another crop.


FARMERS refuse to continue planting tobacco.

"But they ignored us. The NTA's technicians disappeared after (tobacco firms) refused to buy our produce," he said.

Adan and other farmers in Barangay Legaspi here said they went to see President Macapagal-Arroyo when she visited Barangay Vacante in nearby Alcala, Pangasinan early this year, but they were simply told to shift to another crop.

The INQUIRER went to the NTA office here twice to get the NTA's reactions to the farmers' complaint but no official was at the office in both occasions.

With everyone planting corn this season, the farmers' fear this time is the price of corn will drop because of a surge in supply.

Adan said that last year, traders bought corn at P7.50 a kilo at the start of the harvest season but went down to P5/kg at the peak of the harvest season. With almost all of San Manuel farms planted to corn now, Adan said it was likely that the price of corn would drop.

Malazo said a farmer could plant tobacco this season if the farms around him were planted to corn. Otherwise, the tobacco plants will rot from water spilled from the corn farms.

Also, a farmer cannot plant corn when his farm's surrounding is planted to tobacco, otherwise, his corn would be infested with rats.

Adan, who wished he could just turn to planting palay the entire year, said he could not because there was no functional irrigation system in place.

Jo Clemente, PDI Central Luzon Desk

RP seeks registration of $1.5B in bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES is preparing to register anew some $1.5 billion worth of securities with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission ahead of a global bond deal in January that would complete the government's remaining $750-million funding requirement and partially address National Power Corp.'s huge dollar needs.

The National Power Corp. needs to raise between $1.5 billion and $2 billion in 2004 to pay maturing obligations and fund some capital expenditures.

Global bond issues require the registration of the bonds to be sold to American investors with the US SEC.

Of the $1.5 billion in securities the country registered in August, only $800 million worth have yet to be issued but the amount was not sufficient to meet the requirement of Napocor.

The Philippines is the largest sovereign debt issuer in Asia outside of Japan. In October, it issued $1.05 billion worth of 10-year and 22-year global bonds, followed by a three-year bond float worth $250 million a month later.

"We are preparing for a scenario wherein the national government will have to borrow again in behalf of Napocor, as we anticipate that investors will be more reluctant to lend during a volatile election period to a cash-strapped company like Napocor," said a finance official.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said her department had received offers from banks to underwrite a new bond issue.

"We may go back to the market soon if conditions will be favorable for us. We should take advantage of the offers," said the finance chief.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the government could re-open existing global bond facilities in January if market conditions were favorable.

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$10,000 to $49,999	2.625	2.875	3.125	3.375	3.625
$50,000 to $99,999	2.875	3.125	3.375	3.625	3.875
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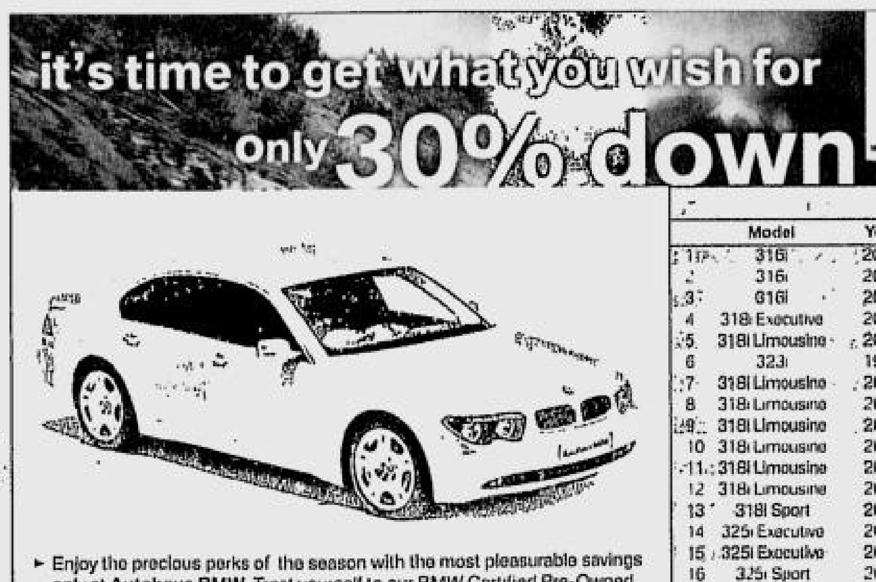

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4	318i Executive	2002	Black Sapphire	16,500	1,525,000
5	318i Limousine	2002	Titanium Silver	13,000	1,590,000
6	323i	1999	Light Yellow	30,000	1,600,000
7	318i Limousine	2002	Black Sapphire	7,500	1,630,000
8	318i Limousine	2003	Steel Gray	12,000	1,650,000
9	318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	9,000	1,650,000
10	318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	3,500	1,675,000
11	318i Limousine	2003	Orient Blue	4,500	1,675,000
12	318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	5,000	1,675,000
13	318i Sport	2003	Titanium Silver	8,500	2,100,000
14	325i Executive	2003	Titanium Silver	12,500	2,300,000
15	325i Executive	2003	Titanium Silver	3,500	2,375,000
16	325i Sport	2003	Imola Red	4,000	2,475,000
17	525i Executive	2001	Orient Blue	6,500	2,500,000
18	525i Executive	2002	Titanium Silver	18,000	2,550,000
19	525i Executive	2002	Titanium Silver	13,000	2,550,000
20	Z4	2003	Black Sapphire	5,000	2,950,000
21	525i Executive	2003	Toledo Blue	8,000	3,100,000
22	745 Li	2002	Black Sapphire	14,000	6,500,000

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Nestle Philippines, Inc. gets Asian Corporate Social Responsibility Award

THE ASIAN Corporate Social Responsibility Awards recently gave the Greening the Supply Chain (GSC) of Nestle Philippines Inc. (NPI) the highest award for Environmental Excellence for 2003. A total of 27 companies from Hong Kong, India, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand submitted their own environmental projects and NPI's GSC was voted the best among the 35 entries in the category.

The Gala Award Dinner of the Asian Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility held at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand was attended by 300 senior executives from all over Asia. Nestle Philippines, represented by Juan Santos, Corporate Affairs SVP Mabini Antonio, corporate environmental services head jess Reyes and corporate environmental manager Roberto Feliciano received the award from Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The judges of the Asian CSR Awards noted the positive quantified results and the unselfish goal of big company like Nestle to influence the behavior of its suppliers and business partners. Through the project, consumers of Nestle are assured of environmentally friendly production processes used in the manufacture of the company's products.

"This is a real honor for Nestle Philippines. The award justifiably acknowledges the sincere efforts of our environmental management teams both at the corporate level and in the factories. My congratulations to all who work hard for the continued success of GSC," beamed NPI technical division head John Jessup.

Greening the supply chain was launched in 2000 to promote environmentally friendly practices among the company's business partners by helping them formulate and implement their own Environmental Management Sytems (EMS). The project, which is now on its third year, has already trained 150 participants from 81 companies. It has also successfully helped the first batch establish their own EMS and realize benefits. The second batch of participants are currently setting up their respective EMS.

The Asian CSR is the third prestigious recognition won by the GSC program this year. It bagged the Anvil Award for Excellence given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippine last February. Then in April, it won the success story award from the Pollution Control Association of the Philippines (Picap) for successfully implementing an environmental program which can be replicated by other companies.

The project was also included in anthology of 68 cases on sustainable development entitled "Walk the Talk" by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. This is the first time a Nestle project has garnered such recognition.

"This award is a well deserved recognition of all Nestle employees who have demonstrated their commitment, not only to an environmental protection, but to our being a good corporate citizen. We have lived up to the standards of our business corporate principles. We have indeed, walked the talk," says corporate affairs SVP Mabini Antonio.

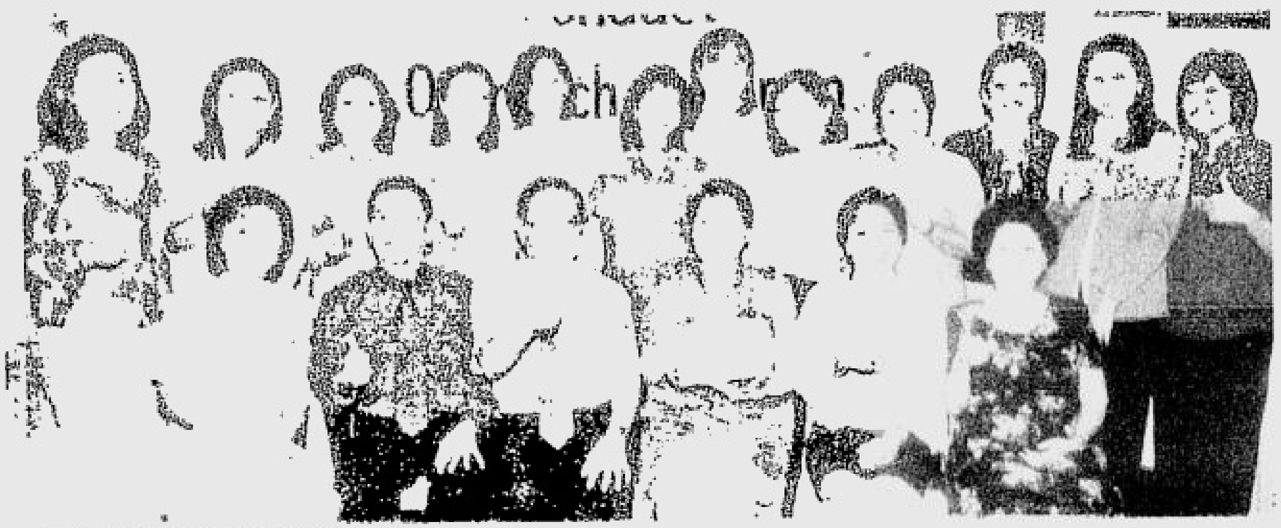
The Asian CSR Awards 2003 is a joint project of the Asian Institute of Management Ramon V. del Rosario Sr. Center for Corporate Social Responsibility, the Population and Community Development Association of Thailand and the Ford Foundation.

SMART INKS SMS AGREEMENT WITH PRC

In support of good governance initiatives, Smart Communications Inc. recently signed an agreement with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to provide Filipino professionals with a direct communication line to the regulatory body. In the memorandum agreement, Smart committed to provide a dedicated text channel where the public can make inquiries as well as their concerns straight to the PRC. Photo shows Ricky Isla (third from left), Smart head for customer care, sealing the deal with a handshake from PRC chair Antonieta Fortuna-Ibe (fourth from left). With them are (from left) James Perez, I-Con business development and services manager; Brenda Dichoso, I-Con general manager; Commissioner Avelina dela Rea-Tan; and Commissioner Leonor Rosero.

LECTURE ON SUSTAINABLE MARKETING TOOL

Public relations and media events strategist Dindo A. Danao (center) received a plaque of appreciation from the business management class of professor Denis Gutierrez of De La Salle University after delivering a lecture on "The Need for Corporate Sponsorships" in special events last Oct. 14 at the DLSU in Taft Avenue, Manila. Danao, who heads the consultancy firm Ideas & Images, stressed the importance of special events as a sustainable marketing tool among corporate organizations.



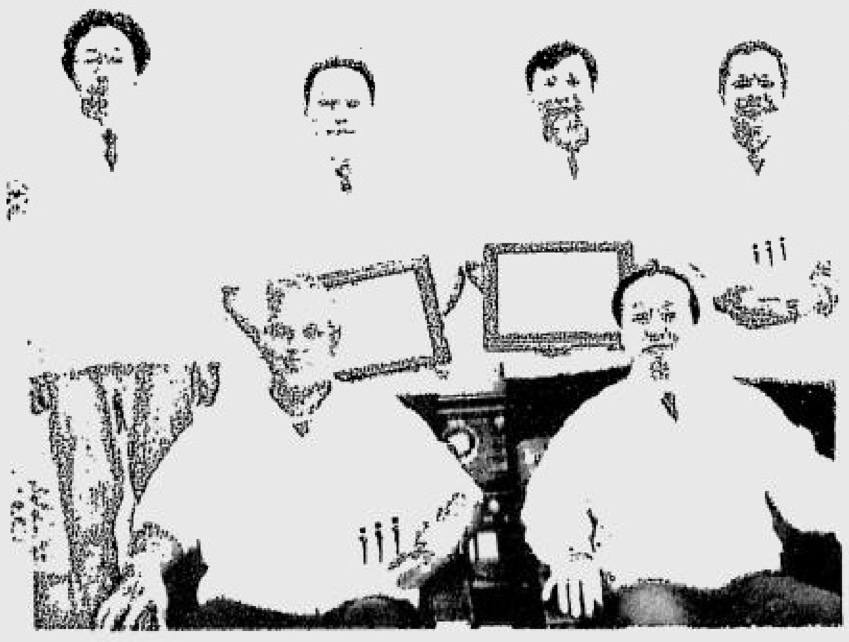
PEDIATRIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

Merck Sharp & Dohme Philippines (MSD) recently supported the pediatric outreach program of the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (PSAAI). MSD donated montelukast sodium of PSAAI as part of the company's mission of raising public awareness about the prevention and treatment of asthma. The asthma medicines will be distributed by PSAAI through its pediatric outreach program to asthma clinics of selected accredited training hospitals. Officers and staff of MSD and PSAAI give the thumbs up during recent turnover of montelukast sodium which was led by (seated, from left) Christine Liwanag, MSD corporate affairs director; Dr. Greg Macaraeg, MSD associate medical director; Dr. Emmanuel Ferreria, PSAAI board of director; Dr. Madeleine Sumpaico, PSAAI president; Dr. Hiyasmin Lim, PSAAI president-elect and Dr. Nenita Alberto, PSAAI board of director.

ARAW-ARAW, KWARTA SA DE LATA!
KARNE NORTE

KARNE NORTE PROMO

Foodsphere Inc. has tapped Buy N' Text Corp. as its service and content provider for a nationwide text-based promotion dubbed "CDO Karne Nortext, Cash Papremyo." Presdent during the contract signing held last week in Valenzuela City were (seated from left) Foodsphere's Eduardo Reataza, vice president, sales and marketing; Maritess Escarcha, assistant general manager and Buy N' Text's Allelujah Martinex, business development director.



HCPI RECEIVES GOLD BEST QUALITY AWARD

Honda Cars Philippines Inc.'s national service department and dealer Honda Cars Quezon City Inc. were recently bestowed with a Gold Best Quality (BQ) award certificate by Honda Motor Co. Ltd. in Tokyo, Japan, with the theme "Collaboration in H-Smart Implementation". H-Smart (Honda Service Management Action Renovation Training) is a training program for Honda dealerships' service operations, which focuses on the operation and inter-personal skills of the service advisors and support staff. In photo, (standing, from left) Honda overseas service training manager Yoshitaka Kajikawa; Honda Cars Quezon City service manager Jojo Aliganga; Honda Cars Phils. Inc. field service training supervisors Freddy I. Cariaga; Honda Cars Phils. Inc. assistant vice president for parts and service Danny Pedro; (seated, from left) Honda Cars Quezon City general manager Gene de Jesus and Honda overseas service operations general manager Koji Arai.

Designing women in Earth+style My Home magazine

CELEBRATE the glory and sophistication of being a woman with the third anniversary issue of Earth+Style My Home magazine six divine women designers who share the secrets of success in their careers and personal lives.

Also, creativity in your own home may create a distinct look and pronounce your individuality, but hiring a professional interior designer is still the best way to go to avoid overlooking intricate details of your abode, as featured in "Why Hire a Designer?" in Agot Style, actress/interior designer Agot Isidro once again offers effective and practical tips in furniture preservation, stain removal techniques and indoor plant maintenance. My Condo features enchanting home designs combining modern, ethnic and traditional furniture and interior colors that produce tasteful blends of old and new while My City features harmonious interiors and a mixture of accessories, antiques and tribal art in Maria Closa's lavishly and artistically designed three-storey pre-war edifice along the busy streets of Ermita.

Decorate your home with exotic oriental furniture and accessories featured in My Home Accessories Guide. In My Hideaway, learn to love and appreciate outdoor living as manifested in the airy, fresh and native huts in Laguna owned by Eugene and Mona Lisa Cosme. My Garden features a luscious tropical garden that absolutely exudes the Asian look, from plant arrangements to carefully selected adornments.

In My Celebrity, former presidential daughter Imee Marcos' humble beginnings are highlighted as well and her father's pride - a uniquely Asian and exquisitely designed home in San Juan. Lastly, farm fresh food from the Peleas' Laguna restaurant is highlighted in Entertainment, Asian furniture masterpieces by Kayu are featured in My Profile, latest happenings and launches are on the spotlight in My Events, as well as TV personality Julius Babao's favorite home spot in My Favorite Space.

Published by Earth+Style (pronounced as "Earth and Style") Corporation, the lifestyle property developer, in cooperation with Mega Magazine and Publications Inc., Earth+Style My Home continues to make beautiful Filipino lifestyles happen. Earth+Style My Home is available in newsstands, bookstores and specialty shops nationwide.

ABS-CBN REACHES AGREEMENT WITH SUPERVISORS' UNION

After ten days of talks, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has recently entered into a renewed Collective Bargaining Agreement with the network's supervisors union. Present on the signing of the supervisors' union CBA were (from left) Marn Nepomuceno, vice president, CommGroup, human resources department; ABS-CBN president and COO Freddie M. Garcia; Gabby Lopez, ABS-CBN chair and COO; Albert Brillantes, president, supervisors' union; Edwin Enrico, chair, supervisors' union board of directors; Eden Siriban, supervisors' union secretary; and Quin Ocampo, supervisors' union auditor. Not present in the photograph is Philbert Berba, ABS-CBN vice president for human resources and chair of the management panel.

Art Plaza launch at the Shangri-La Plaza

IN KEEPING with Shangri-La Plaza's commitment to further promote the interests of the arts, Shangri-La launched the Art Plaza, a new haven for arts, art aficionados and art collectors. Located at Level 4 of Shangri-La Plaza, the Art Plaza will certainly be a new hub for people who appreciate art as well as welcome despite from the hustle and bustle of shopping. Guests at the launch were tenants, Shangri-La Plaza executives, noted artists and the Vice Mayor of Mandaluyong, Jesus Cruz.

The formal unveiling was led by Vice Mayor Cruz with Shangri-La Plaza chair and president Tomas C. Zita, Jr., noted artists like Mauro Malang Santos and Dr. yoyong Saprid, son of the late artist, Solomon Saprid. Tomas Zita, in his speech emphasized the Shangri-La's commitment to "encourage and nurture the artistic spirit" the Art Plaza is the culmination of that such environment.

Shangri-La Plaza's celebrity mall endorser, Pops Fernandez graced the event and serenade the guests with a selection of timeless ballads.

Another highlight of the event was the unveiling of the exhibition of the works of the late Solomon Saprid. The paintings, sculptures and sketches were on display for all the guests to see and appreciate. Larry Henares and Solomon Saprid's son, Dr. Yoyong Saprid paid fitting tribute to the artist's work and life. The exhibition is on until February.

Shangri-La Plaza was awarded the "Best Shopping Center of the Year 2003" by the DTI/PRA.

EO institutionalizes lifestyle checks

MALACAÑANG has issued Executive Order 259 allowing the Department of Finance to create an internal affairs team that would institutionalize the lifestyle checks on erring officials of revenue collection agencies of the government.

Called the Revenue Integrity Protection Service or RIPS, the team is tasked to carry out investigations and to file complaint against erring revenue officials. It has a yearly budget of P10 million.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the EO would strengthen the powers of the DOF to conduct the lifestyle checks that it had started this year.

Assistant Secretary Emmanuel Bonoan currently heads the Central Management Information Office, the internal affairs unit that will now be known RIPS.

This unit had filed before the Ombudsman in July cases of graft and corruption against three senior officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and one Customs official. In May, it also charged before the Ombudsman three BIR officials for falsification of employment records.

The government has estimated that about P100 billion in tax and tariff collection yearly is lost to corruption. Corruption is a major reason for the decline in government revenue through the years.

The BIR and the Customs, which account for more than 90 percent of the state's annual income, are also two of the most-corrupt agencies of the government, according to a survey completed early this year by the Social Weather Station.

Finance officials said the DOF could also solicit grants and technical assistance from multilateral agencies to fund the ongoing drive to stamp out corruption particularly in revenue collecting agencies.

Corruption in government is one of the factors being raised by business groups as among those that pulled down investor confidence in the country. The others are peace and order, and smuggling.

In May, the CMIO charged before the Ombudsman for falsification of employment documents BIR Assistant Revenue Regional Director Aguinaldo Miravalles, BIR Assistant Revenue District Officer Kamil Bajunaid, and former BIR Revenue District Officer Godofredo San Jose Jr.

They were found falsifying documents to change their birth dates to allow them to extend their tenure in the office.

Smuggled goods from China hurting local industries

By Michelle V. Remo

MANILA Congressman Harry Angping is set to file a resolution against the sale of suspected smuggled items from China, which have been flooding the market, particularly in Manila.

Angping, who represents the third district of Manila, said that cheap and mostly pirated products from China, such as cassette discs and players, had adversely affected the operations of legitimate businesses in the area.

"Even Chinese-Filipino businessmen who legally operates in Manila have complained against these smuggled products coming from China," he said in a briefing.

The solon said the resolution, which he intends to file after the congressional break on Dec. 20 to Jan. 11, would include anti-smuggling provisions and protective measures against cheap Chinese products. These measures, he said, would include tariff adjustments and the intensification of the Bureau of Custom's monitoring operations.

Angping also said smuggled and pirated items continued to proliferate in retail outlets and flea markets in Manila despite increased efforts of the customs bureau to curb smuggling.

Angping said he was also asking the Senate to fast-track the passage of a pending bill that would classify smuggling as an act of economic sabotage. The bill seeks the imposition of capital punishment on violators of the law.

He said a similar bill, which will impose capital punishment on both direct and technical smuggling, had already been passed by the Lower House.

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This gives notice that the estate of the late Alicia Esperanza Cuesta Delos Santos of Poblacion, Pulilan, Bulacan who died intestate on 8 March 1999 was extrajudicially settled among her heirs through an Extrajudicial Settlement of Estate acknowledged on 5 December 2003 before Notary Public for and in Makati City Rachel Angela Anosan and entered in her Notarial Register as Doc.No.92 Page No.19 Book No. III Series of 2003. (PDI-Dec.15,22&29,2003)

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GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES FOR THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION FOR SELF-GENERATION FACILITIES

Pursuant to Section 34 of Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" or "EPIRA" and Section 7 of Rule 18 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation hereby adopts the following Guidelines/Procedures for the Issuance of a Certificate of Registration to Self-Generation Facilities

Section 1. **Objectives** – This set of Guidelines is prescribed to identify all Self-Generation Facilities in the country which are covered by the exemption from the imposition of Universal Charge (UC) for a period of four (4) years from February 2003 billing period.

Section 2. **Scope** – This Guidelines shall apply to all Self-Generation Facilities owned and constructed by an end-user for its own consumption or internal use excluding Generation Facilities for use by households, clinics, hospitals and other medical facilities.

Section 3. **Procedures** – All Self-Generation Facilities shall apply for the issuance of a Certificate of Registration with PSALM's Universal Levy Department. Provided all the requirements shall have been complied with, PSALM shall notify the Self-Generation Facilities of its action within sixty (60) working days from the date of application unless PSALM shall have required the submission of additional information.

Section 4. **Requirements** – The following documents/information are required to be submitted by all Self-Generation Facilities:

a) Company Profile;
b) Certified true copy of the Articles of Incorporation/Partnership (for Corporation/Partnership);
c) DTI Certificate of Registration (for Single Proprietorship);
d) Business Permit; and
e) General Plant Description.

Section 5. **Deferment** – Consistent with Rule 18, Section 7 of the IRR, all Self-Generation Facilities whether new, existing or under construction shall not be covered by the imposition of UC for a period of four (4) years from its imposition; Provided, That, such Self-Generation Facilities shall register with the ERC and PSALM within the 4-year period.

Section 6. **Ocular Inspection** – The PSALM, in coordination with ERC and TRANSCO, shall conduct ocular inspection of the facilities of self-generation entities to validate the documents submitted.

Section 7. **Separability** – If for any reason, any section of this Guidelines is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or sections hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 8. **Effectivity** – This Guidelines shall take effect on the fifteenth (15th) day following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.
Makati City, December 5, 2003

EDGARDO M. DEL FONSO
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(PDI-Dec. 22 & 29, 2003)

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"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me.
In My Father's house are many rooms...;
I am going there to prepare a place for you." John 14:1-2

CARLO MIGUEL "MIGS" CEPEDA SISON

February 19, 1977 - December 22, 2002

On the occasion of "Migs" first death anniversary, we would like to request all those whose lives he has touched, to join us in thanking the Lord for his life, remembering fond and cherished memories of him.

We would also wish to express our gratitude to all who condoled with us in the hour of our bereavement. Your prayers gave us strength to bear the unbearable. Your presence helped soothe our pain. You were God's gentle hands, compassion and love. Thank you.

Bobby and **Marile**
Paolo & Pauline, Giulio, Emilio
Robi & Angeli, Marek, Enzo, Ruiz
Sison & Cepeda families

MAXIMO AQUINO CALIMLIM SR.

FORMER MAYOR, MAPANDAN, PANGASINAN

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord on December 20, 2003 at the age of 84.

His beloved wife **ARSENIA VILLANUEVA MEJIA**; children **FELICITAS & JESUS (†), JOSE & CRISTINA, FLORO & LETICIA, MAXIMO JR. & ROSE, PANFILO & ELISA, RODOLFO & CARMEN, CESAR (†) & ASUNCION, RENATO & LOLITA, WILFREDO, EDUARDO & YOLANDA**; grandchildren, great grandchildren and relatives request friends and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at No. 452 Pandan Avenue, Mapandan, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 28, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. at the Mapandan Cemetery, Pangasinan.

DESIDERIA H. AMPON

Peacefully joined her Creator on December 20, 2003 at the age of 79.

Her body lies in state at Chapel J of the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, December 23, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe.

Her family requests the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Judith Lourdes Marcial Tapia

Joined her Creator on 11 December 2003 at the age of 36.

Her bereaved parents **Joselito & Melicia**; brother **Joel**; sister **Jesseree**; uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews & nieces request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Faith Chapel, Don Bosco Parish Church, Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, 23 December 2003 at the Manila South Cemetery, South Avenue, Makati City, after the 1:00 pm Mass at Don Bosco Church.

ANTONIO L. LEAL, SR.

Peacefully joined our Lord on Dec. 19, 2003 at the age of 91.

His children **FLAVIO SR. & ZENAIDA, ANDREA, JOSEFA, ANGELICA, JOSEFINA & MARIANO, ANTONIO JR**; grandchildren **Flavio Jr., Lynn, Michelle, Lilibeth, Cheryl, Aldrin, Ivy, Karen, Carol, Marnie, Sharon, Carlo, Nerissa, Mario, Christian, Lian, Lester, Mark**; great-grandchildren **Gabriel, Rafael, Noelle Adrienne, Nicole, Andrea**; sisters **Maxima** and **Rosario**, request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Leal residence at 336 M.H. Del Pilar St., Gitnang Bayan 1, San Mateo, Rizal.

Interment will be on Dec. 23, 2003. For details, please call 297-4597/ (0920) 2578040.

We, the family of the late

RUBEN MIRANDA ORTEZA

who died 13 December 2003

wish to convey our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to our relatives, friends, and all those who sent condolences, flowers and donations, prayed, called, conducted and attended the funeral services, helped and comforted us in so many ways during our time of bereavement.

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

TEODORA R. SALVADOR

wish to convey our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to our relatives, friends, and all those who sent condolences, flowers, donations, offered Masses and prayers, called from abroad, attended the funeral rites, and helped and comforted us in so many ways during our time of bereavement.

"For God so loved the World, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."

—John 3:16

CLASSIFIEDS

Christmas Post

Think aloud and feel aloud. This Christmas, add the warmth and essence of heartfelt feelings to all the special people in your life.

On December 25, 2003, publish your personal holiday greetings and messages in Inquirer's "Christmas Post" and share with them the joy of this holiday season.

A serving of sweetness and a load of good cheer sent with warmest wishes to your family and friends so dear courtesy of INQUIRER **Classifieds.**

Take advantage of this special offer at a discounted rate of P50 per line and P150 per column centimeter for box ads.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MESSAGEBOARD

SAMPLE ADS

Merry Christmas Abby! God bless you and your family – Rosi
size: 3 lines
cost: P165 vat incl.

Happy Holidays, Jill! May God bless you always. – Teresa
size: 2 lines
cost: P110 vat incl.

Cherrie,
Season after season, I'm so thankful for special friends like you. Happy Holidays!
Much love,
PJ
size: 1 col x 4 cm
cost: P660 vat incl.

For more information, visit or call any Inquirer branch. Prices are VAT exclusive.

[illegible]

Deadline of Ad Placement: *December 20, 2003*

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

The Baguio Regional Office of the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) invites interested and qualified contractors to submit pre-qualification documents and bid for the implementation of the following projects located at Pinesville Subdivision, Barangay Fort del Pilar, Baguio City:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET
1. Development of Commercial Area, Pinesville Subdivision	5,822,275.49
2 Development of Blocks 19-23, Pinesville Subdivision	3,260,350.83

Contract duration for the HGC-funded project is TWO HUNDRED FORTY (240) CALENDAR DAYS.

Invitation to Bid shall be limited to applicants with current classification by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Category "Medium A" specializing in subdivision land development.

Schedule of Bidding is;

Issuance of pre-qualification documents	December 22, 2003
Deadline of submission of prequalification documents	December 30, 2003
Notice of qualification for bidding	January 30, 2004
Site inspection/issuance of bid documents	February 13, 2004
Pre-bid conference	February 25, 2004
Submission and opening of bids	2:00 PM, March 19, 2004

Interested bidders may secure qualification/eligibility requirements at the Home Guaranty Corporation – Baguio Regional Office, 2/F, Insular Life Building, Abanao Road Extension, Baguio City. Contact Engr. Fernando G. Caburao through telephone numbers (074) 443-60-33, (074) 443-95-85 (facsimile), (074) 446-48-81. Only qualified bidders will be issued Bid Documents and upon payment of a non-refundable bid fee in the amount of Php10,000.00

Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184 shall govern all particulars relative to qualification/eligibility, evaluation of bids and award of contract.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WITHOUT OFFERING ANY REASON, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND MAKE AN AWARD TO THE BIDDER WHOSE BID IS MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DELOS SANTOS
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 15 & 22, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF RIZAL
Municipality of Morong

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Morong through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractor classified by and registered with the Philippines Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as indicated below to apply for eligibility and if subsequently found eligible to Bid for the following Project/s charged to General Fund.

Name of Projects Location
1. Improvement/Concreting of Tungque St
2. Fabrication and Installation of Steel Mating at Bombongan Multi-Purpose Site.
3. Fabrication and Installation of Two (2) Units Basketball Goal at Porok ng Pag-ibig Basketball Court.
4. Improvement/Embankment of Wawa Multi-Purpose Playground.
5. Improving/Concreting of Koyanba Road
6. Improvement of Caniogan Fisherman Wharf.
7. Improvement/Concreting of Natividad St.
8. Improvement/Concreting of Co. Garrovillas St.
9. Improvement of Maybancal Multi-Purpose Plaza
10. Graveling of E. Dela Paz St.

Note: Required Contractor's Classification:
(*) at least Small A (**) at least Small B

Implementation of the Contract Works shall commence upon the approval of the Contract and issuance of the notice to proceed and should be completed within the above contract duration.

Interested contractors shall submit their duly accomplished EXPRESSION OF INTENT of each project, together with ELIGIBILITY STATEMENTS to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) thru its Secretariat at the Office of MPDC not later than 4:00 p.m. on January 7-9, 2004. ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT FORM shall be issued upon presentation of original copy of Constructor's valid PCAB license for verification/authentication purposes

Issuance of Bid Documents – Jan. 7-9, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference – Jan. 9, 2004 at 2:00 PM
Submission of Bids – Not later than 10:00 AM on Jan. 14, 2004
Opening of Bids Jan. 14, 2004 at 2:00 PM

For further Information, Prospective and qualified bidders may inquire at the Office of the Chairman, BAC thru its Secretariat, Municipal Hall, Morong, Rizal.

Bid documents will be available to eligible contractors on the date shown above and upon Payment of a non-refundable fee per schedule of values and project cost.

All particulars relative to pre-qualification, Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Municipality of Morong reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defect therein.

The Municipality of Morong assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation to the Bid.

(Sgd.) HON. JORGE N. BERNARDO
Municipal Mayor

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Rizal
MUNICIPALITY OF MORONG

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

INVITATION TO BID

The Municipal Government of Morong, Rizal invites interested accredited suppliers to submit sealed bids for the supply of various kinds of medicines, office supplies, and office equipments.

Bid documents stipulating specifications/descriptions, terms and conditions shall be available for issuance from January 7-9, 2004 upon payment of non-refundable fee of ONE HUNDRED PESOS (P100.00) per set. Sealed bids in two (2) sets accompanied by a bid bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the bid amount and callable upon demand shall be submitted to the Office of the Mayor on January 13, 2004 not later than 12:00 noon, to be publicly opened at 2:00 p.m. on the same date.

The Municipality of Morong, Rizal reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formalities therein, and to accept such bids not necessarily the lowest but deemed to be the most advantageous to the Municipal Government of Morong, Rizal

(Sgd.) HON. JORGE N. BERNARDO
Municipal Mayor

(PDI–Dec 22 2003)

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INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Leo Magno

7 toys not just 4 geeks or boys

A geek's Christmas wish list

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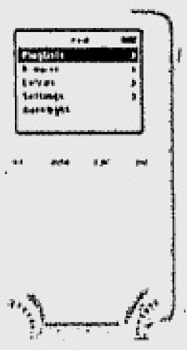

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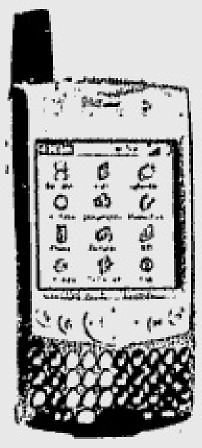

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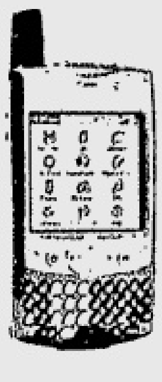
TREO/B11



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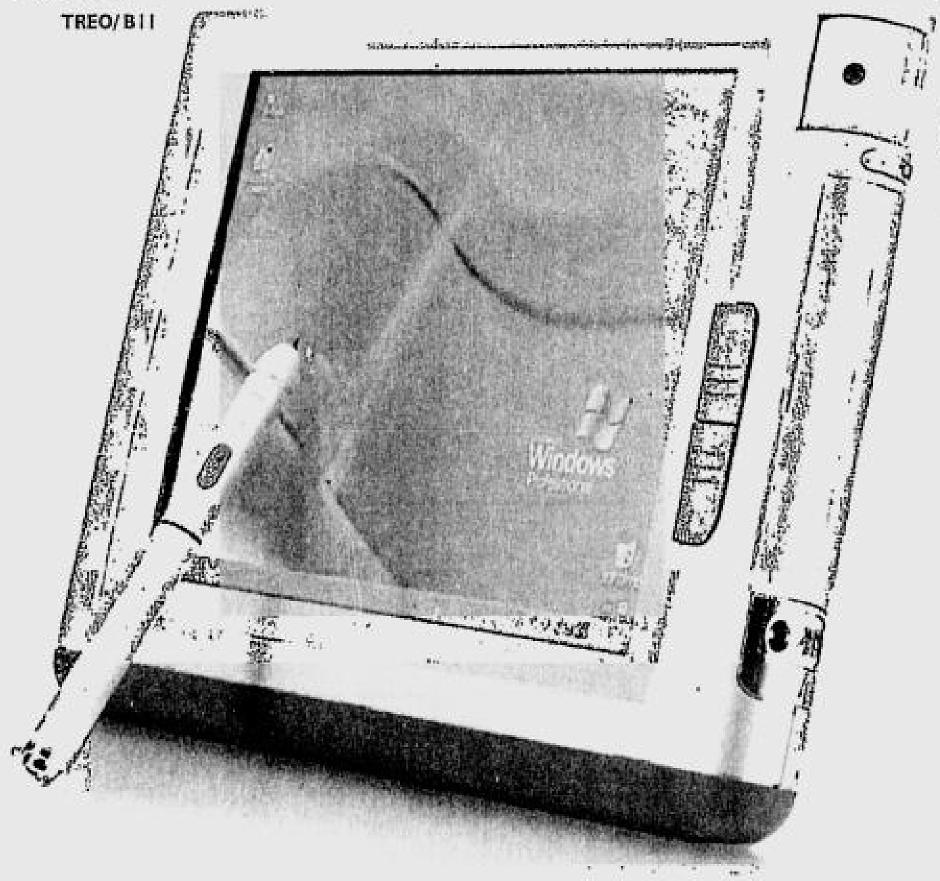
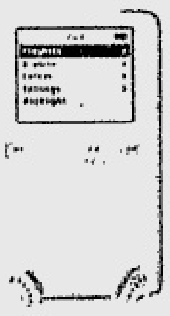
The 10-Gb version I have comes with the basic package minus the remote control, the dock which serves as a base cradle for charging and synching, and the carrying case. These accessories are included in the higher Gb models. If you ask me, the 20-Gb version gives more value for money because, for a P5,000 difference from the 10-Gb model, you get the accessories plus twice the capacity for a whopping 5,000 songs. Other optional accessories are the battery pack which uses four AA batteries for 20 more hours of operation, a car

IGOT/B11





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The ECS EZ Tablet won't be commercially available in the Philippines till early next year, but Axis Global Technologies Inc., the exclusive distributor of ECS products in the country, says the device will retail for around P70,000. Not bad for a tablet PC that's almost half the price of current American-brand tablet PC models.

First thing you'll notice is the size of the EZ Tablet. It's smaller than the usual tablet PCs, which seek to emulate the full-screen display size of notebooks. The display of the EZ Tablet is an 8.4-inch, 600 x 800, SVGA TFT-LCD screen that rotates 90 degrees for either landscape or portrait view. Pick it up and you'll be happy about its weight and feel. It's only 2.6 lb and measures 23.6 cm x 17.5 cm—smaller than a letter-sized bond paper. The EZ Tablet is only 2.5 cm deep. It's just like a 200-page hardbound book, only slightly heavier.

But what's more impressive about the EZ Tablet is the built-in features.

Connectivity is both wired and wireless with built-in wi-fi (802.11b), RJ-11 jack for a built-in 56 kbps modem, and an RJ-45 LAN port for 10/100 mbps Ethernet.

External input/output interfaces are aplen-

EZ TABLET/B11

Back up your SMS, phonebook!

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WHEN transferring from one cell phone operator to another, you have to change your SIM. However, a lot of saved text messages and phonebook entries may be in that old SIM of yours, so you either send SMS and contact numbers to your new phone (quite expensive) or write them all down on a piece of paper then copy them to the new SIM.

But that was before. Recently I got an inexpensive (less than P500) gizmo in Singapore from Gemplus. It's called MySIMcopier.

Gemplus' MySIMcopier is a small, funky handheld device. The idea is simple: Slide the old SIM into the left slide door on top of the device, slip in the new SIM into the right slide door, close both doors, input your password and then press "OK." In a flash, contact details and text messages in the old SIM will be transferred to the new one.

A study by Gemplus shows that having to re-enter phonebook entries is seen by 75 percent of respondents as a barrier to operator migration. The study said that given such a device as MySIMcopier, 84 percent of respondents would transfer from one operator to another.

This should give Globe, Smart and especially Sun Cellular a good idea. They can offer MySIMcopier to subscribers of competing phone services, bundle their own SIM card with the copier and offer them to switch in an aggressive promotion.

Just don't forget to give me credit for the idea, okay? *Leo Magno*

Flash drive on your wrist

http://www.inq7.net/inf/2003/dec/15/inf_4-1.htm

THE NEC wristwatch looks like an ordinary analog watch. It's made of clear and tough plastic, water resistant, shock proof and anti-static. It has one dial for you to adjust the time. It has no alarms, no stopwatch function, no bells and whistles.

But that's not what's important about this watch. Inside ticks not just a mechanism to tell the time. It has a flash drive wherein you can store 64-Mb of data—a perfect solution to my travel needs.

The watch has a built-in USB 1.1 plug tucked into the bracelet. You pull out the plug and slip it into a computer's USB slot and you now have 64-Mb of external storage. It comes with a 3-foot USB extension cord for those who want to plug in the device to the computer while you're still wearing the watch. Or you can take the watch off and plug it in directly to the USB slot. No external power supply needed since the watch is USB bus-powered.

I got one recently, but will somebody please make it locally available and introduce the 256-Mb model? Please? *Leo Magno*

TECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

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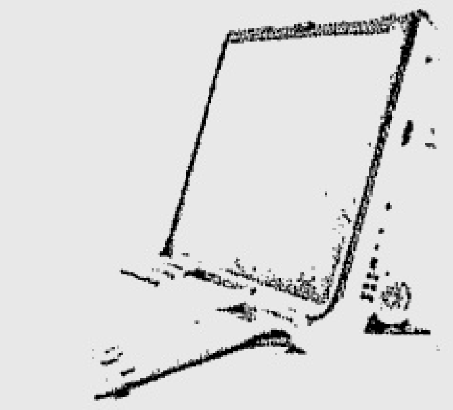

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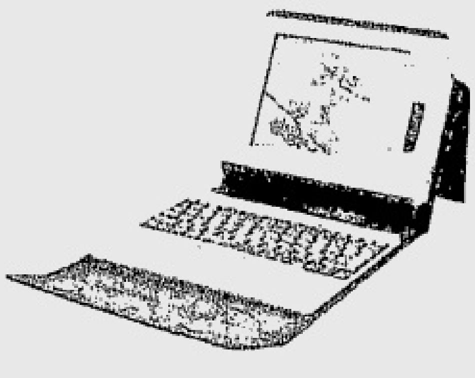

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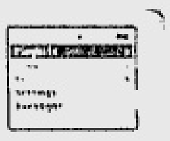

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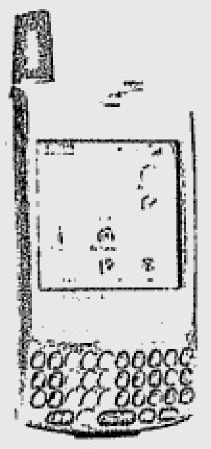

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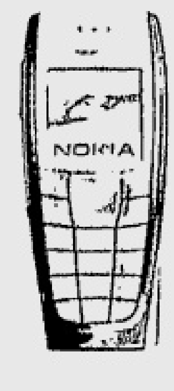

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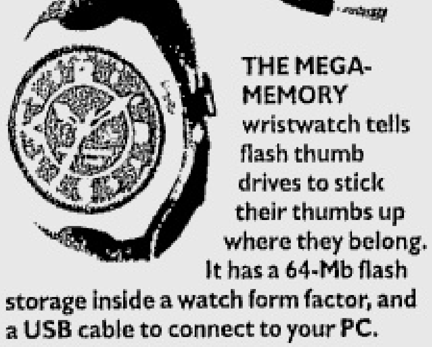

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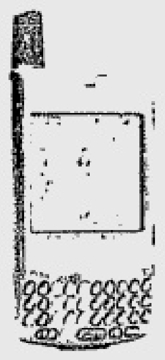

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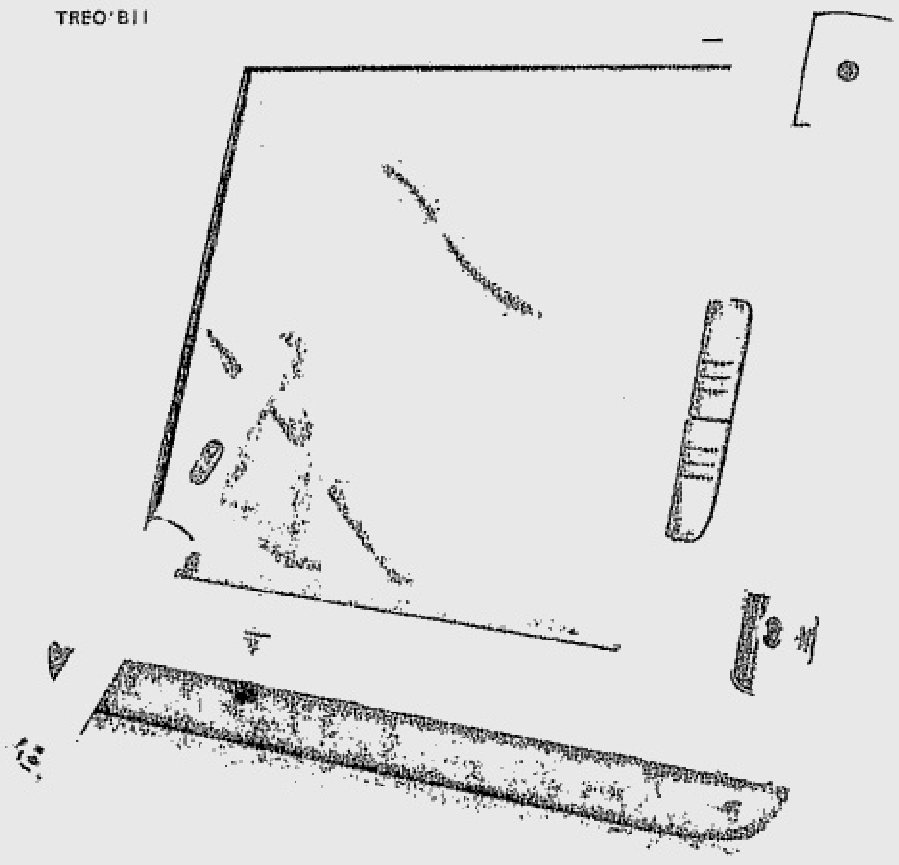

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WHEN transferring from one cell phone operator to another, you have to change your SIM. However, a lot of saved text messages and phonebook entries may be in that old SIM of yours, so you either send SMS and contact numbers to your new phone (quite expensive) or write them all down on a piece of paper then copy them to the new SIM.

But that was before. Recently I got an inexpensive (less than P500) gizmo in Singapore from Gemplus. It's called MySIMcopier.

Gemplus' MySIMcopier is a small, funky handheld device. The idea is simple: Slide the old SIM into the left slide door on top of the device, slip in the new SIM into the right slide door, close both doors, input your password and then press "OK." In a flash, contact details and text messages in the old SIM will be transferred to the new one.

A study by Gemplus shows that having to re-enter phonebook entries is seen by 75 percent of respondents as a barrier to operator migration. The study said that given such a device as MySIMcopier, 84 percent of respondents would transfer from one operator to another.

This should give Globe, Smart and especially Sun Cellular a good idea. They can offer MySIMcopier to subscribers of competing phone services, bundle their own SIM card with the copier and offer them to switch in an aggressive promotion.

Just don't forget to give me credit for the idea, okay? *Leo Magno*

Flash drive on your wrist

http://www.inq7.net/inf/2003/dec/15/inf_4-1.htm

THE NEC wristwatch looks like an ordinary analog watch. It's made of clear and tough plastic, water resistant, shock proof and anti-static. It has one dial for you to adjust the time. It has no alarms, no stopwatch function, no bells and whistles.

But that's not what's important about this watch. Inside ticks not just a mechanism to tell the time. It has a flash drive wherein you can store 64-Mb of data—a perfect solution to my travel needs.

The watch has a built-in USB 1.1 plug tucked into the bracelet. You pull out the plug and slip it into a computer's USB slot and you now have 64-Mb of external storage. It comes with a 3-foot USB extension cord for those who want to plug in the device to the computer while you're still wearing the watch. Or you can take the watch off and plug it in directly to the USB slot. No external power supply needed since the watch is USB bus-powered.

I got one recently, but will somebody please make it locally available and introduce the 256-Mb model? Please? *Leo Magno*

Lifebook L2010 is so sexy

http://www.inq7.net/inf/2003/dec/08/inf_4-1.htm

HOW sexy can a desktop computer get? Ask Apple Computer. Or the Japanese designers down at Fujitsu.

Desktop computers have not changed much in the last 10 years. With the exception of Apple, computers featured box-shaped CPUs and bulky CRT monitors until recently when LCD became more affordable.

So when I saw the Fujitsu Lifebook L2010, I thought there was some mistake since I was told I was going to review a desktop PC. I flipped the box over, and I could not believe that this was the desktop PC local distributor Axis Global was loaning me for a review.

Okay, Axis gave some indication that I was testing a "concept PC" and it should be noted that the L2010 has a lithium-ion battery so it can be considered a notebook computer.

In terms of design, the L2010 is sleek and sexy. I'm now using the L2010 to write this article. I'm seated about three feet away from the computer, typing away using the wireless keyboard and mouse.

The L2010 looks like a picture frame except that the base protrudes horizontally to act as a foundation and support for the LCD monitor. The computer's profile looks like a sexy "L" and resembles a boomerang.

The L2010 comes with an integrated slot-in DVD/CD-RW combo. So you can readily rip and burn CDs or even create crude VCD or DVD movie with the built-in authoring software.

Powered by an AMD XP-M 1800+ processor and an ATI Radeon graphics processor, 256 Mb of memory and 40 Gb of hard disk drive space, this computer will handle most existing applications and games and store various multimedia applications, music, video, pictures and documents. Yes, just like any typical desktop.

This sexy desktop PC supports wireless fidelity (wi-fi) technology. It has a built-in radio transmitter to allow you to connect to a wi-fi hotspot If wi-fi isn't your thing, this PC also comes with an integrated V.92 modem and 10/100 Base-T LAN slot.

Another bonus here is that the L2010 has a secure digital (SD) media slot.

All these plus the sexy look translates to more than P100,000 in retail price, according to Axis. So if you're one of those obsessed with having the best and the sexiest toys for Christmas, you should have this on your desk, or floor, or wherever you want to place it. Santa may just grant your wish.

Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

Nokia 6220 puts you on Edge

http://www.inq7.net/inf/2003/dec/10/inf_3-1.htm

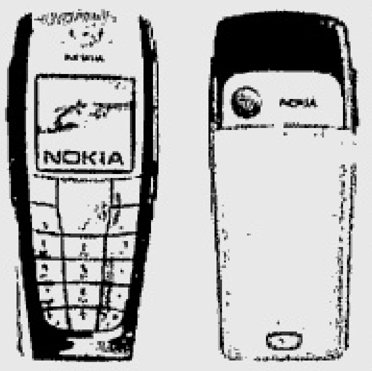
HERE'S a case of putting the cart before the horse.

Yes, it would be cool to use an Edge-capable mobile phone, which brings me closer to the promised third generation (3G) mobile phone experience.

Edge, by definition, is a faster mobile network that allows faster transmission of data. For laypeople, this means you can now download ring tones, logos, Java games and applications quickly and without hitches. Compared with its predecessor, General Packet Radio Service or GPRS, Edge is indeed faster.

But having a Nokia 6220 at this point in time is like having a powerful computer without software. What makes a gadget or a computer good is really the software or content.

The Nokia 6220 is ahead of its time because applications for this Edge phone are still scant. There is no compelling content or application available today. I could blame the mobile operators for the lack of content and applications, though.



The Nokia 6220 is a tri-band mobile phone that comes with a built-in camera that can take a few seconds of video.

This phone also comes with WAP or wireless access protocol version 2.0, which is an improvement over previous versions. I did a lot of "surfing" using this phone. I believe there was some slight improvement in terms of download time compared with my older GPRS-enabled phone made by a rival brand.

Browsing is also better on the 6220 considering that it comes with a color display that supports up to 4,096 colors and a resolution of 128 x 128 pixels.

For downloading, the 6220 also allows you to get some Java applications and games from WAP sites, such as Nokia.com.

It also supports high-speed circuit-switched data, which is a precursor to Edge.

One downside here is that the phone lacks Bluetooth capability, something which, right now, is essential for many applications.

Still, being the first Edge phone of its kind in the market, the 6220 can be a useful toy for mobile surfing technophiles.

Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

EZ tablet is something worth looking into

From page B10

ty. I was happy to see a 4-in-1 card reader (smart media, memory stick, secure digital and multimedia card all in one slot). You don't need a USB multi-format card reader which you can buy for upwards of P1,500. I was very happy to find this as a built-in feature especially now that digital photos are being swapped left and right and the need to handle data in multi-format flash cards is starting to get on my nerves.

Still, if flash cards aren't your thing, you have two USB 2.0 ports where you can slot in USB thumb drives, so you can still manage your digital photos.

Speaking of digital photos and cameras, the EZ Tablet has a 640 x 480 pixel digital camera built-in at the upper-right hand side of the unit. It has a snapshot button on the side for quick shots, or you can always use the digicam software to operate it. The camera can be rotated 180 degrees so either the user in front of the display or a picture subject in front or at the side of the user can be captured in the frame. This is not just a still camera, by the way. You can use the camera on the EZ Tablet as a web cam, for videoconferencing or for recording meetings without your colleagues knowing that they're on candid camera.

You don't have to worry about space for the digital video, either. The EZ Tablet has a respectable 40-Gb hard drive. An external optical drive is optional for CDs and DVDs, but aside from the 4-in-1 flash card slot and the USB port for thumb drives, the EZ Tablet has no built-in provision for external media like diskettes or CDs.

The ECS EZ Tablet uses a Transmeta Crusoe TM5800 chip (running at 800 MHz) and 256 Mb RAM (expandable to 512 Mb). Transmeta is the company which came out big a few years ago with the goal of making energy-efficient processors for mobile devices. They actually were ahead of Intel in this department, since Intel only shipped its Centrino energy-saving chips early this year.

ECS has notebooks based on both Transmeta Crusoe and Intel Centrino, but there's no word yet if they'll also use the Centrino for their tablet PC line.

The reason I want to know if there'll be Centrino-based EZ Tablets in the future is that I wasn't happy with the speed of the EZ Tablet using Crusoe. The Transmeta chip disappoints. I know Windows is a resource-hungry monster, but the slowdown is really noticeable compared to even my old Pentium notebook. This was especially true when I surfed rich multimedia sites.

Also, the first time I shut down the unit, it hung on me. This was not the first time that Windows kept me hanging with the words "Please wait while Windows shuts down" staring you in the face and keeping you in suspense while waiting if the machine would truly shut down or not. This was not something unusual for Windows to do, but definitely something unusual for a brand-new computer. I suspect though, that it was Windows at fault in this particular instance since I've encountered similar incidents with XP on other computers I use. The EZ Tablet I used was installed with Microsoft Windows XP Tablet PC Edition Version 2002, Service Pack 1.

The only solution was to take out the battery—too bad for me the battery cover and the battery itself of the ECS EZ Tablet are not that easy to remove, at least not as easy as shown in the manual (how did that guy in the picture in the manual remove that blasted battery so effortlessly?).

Downsides

The downsides to the otherwise impressive specs I gave earlier are the mono speaker (ECS is harping about the EZ Tablet's use as an MP3 player, but you have to use headphones instead of listening to your music from a mono speaker) and the relatively short battery life. The lithium-ion battery pack is a bit disappointing for a supposedly economical processor like Transmeta and for a wi-fi tablet PC that you're supposed to carry around without a charger (ECS is even calling the EZ Tablet an ultra-mobile PC). The manual said a full charge would last 2.5 hours, but when I stress-tested it while connected to the Internet, checking mail and surfing, the EZ Tablet lasted me just a few minutes shy of two hours.

Still, the downsides of the EZ Tablet are mitigated by the numerous built-in features and accessories included in the P70,000-package, such as a leather jacket where you strap on the tablet PC while a built-in keyboard attaches to connector points at the back of the tablet. This way, you can use both keyboard/touchpad input and the digital pen. The battery-operated digital pen has extra pen points included in the package. The pen itself slides neatly into the upper left side of the tablet PC. You can also attach a USB keyboard or mouse if you want.

Your choice of input is important with any digital device, and the EZ Tablet offers flexibility in this case. You can use the attachable keyboard, use the USB slots or go through the digital pen tutorials.

I've been using pen-based personal digital assistants, but operating a tablet PC entirely with a pen takes some getting used to. Windows XP Tablet PC Edition comes with Windows Journal, a pen-based counterpart of the Notepad staple offering. Instead of using the keyboard on Notepad, however, you jot down notes on Journal using a digital pen.

I tried my hand out on Windows Journal for the first time by writing down the beautiful lyrics of the song "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac, but what came out was a chicken-scratch garble not even worthy of being a doctor's prescription. My 2-year-old son Diego could do better on his magic slate.

When using a word processing software, however, you can still use the tablet PC Input Panel on the taskbar. You can use either the software keyboard in which case you tap on the keys to compose your Notepad text, or you can use the Writing Pad in which case the print or cursive you create using the digital pen will be converted into text. This, however, won't be accurate.

I tried it using Notepad, and wrote down (in print) the same lyrics from "Landslide." The written words were converted into actual text on Notepad, but what came out was text from a blabbering idiot instead of Stevie Nick's soulful words. Again, my 2-year-old son could babble more coherently.

However, this statement about writing on a tablet PC may be unfair since I have yet to be accustomed to the digital pen. Penmanship and learning curve aside, I may in the future get the hang of writing on a tablet.

All in all, the specs and price of the ECS EZ Tablet is something worth considering. It is a full-featured notebook in a light package and tablet PC format, with a lot of built-in features, accessories and connectivity options to keep a mobile warrior happy—wired or unwired.

Leo Magno

Treo 600 gets . . .

From page B10

for such as an SD/MMC expansion slot and a VGA-resolution camera. I upgraded to Treo 600 mainly because of these new features.

On the downside the phone is noticeably heavier than the Treo 270 and has one unfortunate omission in its feature set: Bluetooth. Bluetooth headsets are becoming a necessity as anyone who has ever knotted his hands-free kit's wires into a fine mess around a car's handbrake and gear shift can attest. The omission is made worse by the fact that the PalmOne Bluetooth SD card is not compatible with the Treo 600 as yet—no drivers available apparently. This is a silly situation and the only excuse for it is that Palm and Handspring have only recently merged into PalmOne.

Another omission that some long-time users will look askance at is the removal of the flip cover that protected the screen in earlier models. PalmOne includes a case with the package but drop the phone while using it and you run the risk of cracking the large, vulnerable screen—goodbye Treo 600. At least, the designers have put in a keyguard feature so you don't accidentally dial a long-distance number or access a website while the phone is in your pocket or suitcase.

On a more positive note, the designers of the Treo 600 have replaced the left-side jog dial with a Tungsten-like five-way navigation button that is quite useful and intuitive. You need hardly ever take out the unit's stylus except when using older Palm applications that don't recognize the five-way button, and the phone is now much easier to use one-handed.

Thankfully, amid all these changes, the designers have opted not to touch the unit's docking port so older Treo power adapters, Hotsync cables, and related accessories can still be used.

Accessories

Speaking of accessories, Treo 600 has an accessory that isn't readily available to older Treos: a full-size keyboard, a useful tool for people who do a lot of e-mail and word processing on the road and find the Treo 600's well-designed but nonetheless cramped keyboard ill-suited for all but the shortest of texts (there is a compatible keyboard for the Treo 270, the IR Pocketop keyboard which works through the Treo's IR port).

New features aren't limited to the PDA-side of this smartphone. When I got my Treo 270, I was sorely disappointed that the unit was not tri-band. Evidently, a lot of people felt the same way as the new Treo 600 is not only tri-band but actually quad-band. It operates on the 850, 900, 1800, and 1900 Mhz GSM frequencies—the Treo 600 is usable as a phone practically anywhere in the world.

The phone and the PDA are also much more integrated than in previous Treo models. For example, e-mail addresses, website addresses, and phone numbers in e-mails and text messages are now clickable so you can send an e-mail, access a site, or dial a number directly from the messaging application.

Another cool feature of the SMS application is that text messages are now viewable in threaded format: Messages and your responses to them are grouped by recipient and are viewable in a screen that resembles a typical instant messaging chat window. As the Treo 600 can easily store several hundred text messages, this feature makes it easy to keep track of ongoing conversations.

The Favorites section of the Treo has also been redesigned. Instead of just being a speed-dialer, the section's button can now store websites and frequently used programs as well. It's off-putting though that there doesn't seem to be a way to start up the phone with the Favorites rather than with the phone's touch-screen dial pad. The only other option is to start up with a wallpaper image—which is even less helpful.

All in all, the Treo 600 is a worthy successor to the Treo 270 despite some omissions and shortcomings in its design. If expansion, a camera, and using the phone in the United States are features that are not important to you, the Treo 270 is still available and makes a good choice. But if additional storage, a keyboard, and world-phone capabilities in a stylish package matter to you, then the Treo 600, which I got as a post-paid plan handset from Globe, is the smartphone of choice.

JV Rufino

iGot iPod, uDrool

From page B10

power adapter and new ones from Belkin which turn your iPod into an FM tuner or a voice recorder.

The basic package comes with the iPod unit itself, earphones, a FireWire cable, 6-pin to 4-pin FireWire adapter, a power adapter, iTunes software for the Mac and Musicmatch Jukebox Plus software for Windows.

This is where you start.

The iPod is not designed to be manipulated on its own, nor was it designed to get music on and off the device on the fly. All your playlists, notes and to-do-lists have to be managed from your computer, which means you have to install the software. The manual is dated as it suggests the use of iTunes version 3. ITunes version 4 for the PC is already available, and this is much better than Musicmatch.

I am a Windows user, so I had to install the PC-specific software which wasn't a hassle at all. Since iTunes 4 is not on the installation disk, you have to go fetch it from www.apple.com. From there, get iTunes 4 (in my case for Windows XP) and wait for the 19.1-Mb file to be downloaded.

After you finish installing the Windows core files, you need to set up your playlists on iTunes. ITunes is pretty straightforward like all Apple software and is actually quite slick. I even made it my default audio player—yes, even on a PC. Ironically, installing and synchronizing data from my PC to an Apple product like the iPod was easier than the first time I tried to synchronize data from my Windows PC to a Windows PocketPC Jornada personal digital assistant.

Once all set up, I suggest you get organized in iTunes. Create your playlists; input all the data about the songs' composer, album titles and whatnot. ITunes has a Smart Playlist option that lets you create playlists on the fly by composer, genre, artist, album, bit rate, sampling and at least a dozen other options. Searching for music in iTunes is also a whole lot easier. If you know how to use Google, you're all set. If you don't know how to use Google or any search engine, may the Lord have mercy on your soul.

Now's the time to get all those unorganized MP3s and even encode ones from your CD collection. CDs are in advanced audio codec (AAC) format, and you rip them (as opposed to ripping them off) using iTunes 4 or QuickTime version 6 at 128 kbps bit rate and 44.100 khz sample rate. Your existing MP3, of course, retain their original sample and bit rates.

Your master list of songs in iTunes will be placed in the Library, but the entire Library won't appear in your iPod as is when you synchronize it so you have to create your playlists. Only your playlists will appear so you better organize them now.

Importing a 4-minute song from a CD to iTunes takes about a minute. Just pop in the CD into your computer and drag and drop into iTunes. Other MP3 players require you to play the entire song and listen to its entirety for the song to be encoded.

If you're in the United States, you can also purchase a song online from iTunes for $0.99 per song. Just click on the Music Store icon and, assuming you're online, you'd get hooked up to the Apple Music Store server. However, once you register your iPod's serial number, your country of origin will be required. And, since the iTunes Music Store is not yet available in all countries, a "country warning" will be displayed when you try to purchase a song online. This is primarily because you have to have a US billing address. Like in any Internet purchases which are country-specific, even if you use a US address in the registration and just place a valid US zip code, it would still not match your credit card info. You will, however, be able to browse music and listen to 30-second previews in the Music Store.

When you do buy a song by creating an iTunes account, you can burn the song for an unlimited number of times to a CD or play it on up to three computers or play it as you wish on your iPod.

Download your songs!

Once you've placed all your songs in iTunes, you're ready to transfer them to your iPod. The iPod works with USB version 1.1, but USB 2.0 is recommended. For Mac users, there's also FireWire. However, since the iPod comes with FireWire cables, you need to get a cable kit for the PC which will set you back another P1,578.95. This cable kit connects to the dock via FireWire for continuous charging and simultaneously connects to your USB port, whether 1.1 or 2.0.

You can still connect the iPod to your PC even without the dock connection for charging, and this leads us to my first gripe about the iPod. After fully charging the iPod for four hours, you can play up to 8 hours of continuous playback time. But if you're not charging while synchronizing a lot of songs, you'd discover a significant loss in the battery charge of the iPod.

For example, my initial line-up of playlists included a mere 68 songs or 4.9 hours of music, equivalent to 292.8 Mb. This took up a mere fraction of the 10-Gb hard disk. The transfer from PC to iPod took less than 7 minutes. This translates to about 10 songs per minute. Not bad at all considering I was using USB 1.1—what more if I used FireWire or the even faster USB 2.0. My next synchronization involved a batch of 17 new songs or, more than 60 Mb, but this time it took just a little over a minute or roughly 1 Mb per second which was even faster than before.

However, these two successive synchronizations took their toll on the iPod's battery since I didn't have the docking cradle to charge while synching. With a full charge, the battery dropped to one-half after synching twice in a row.

While we're at the gripes department, I might as well mention another one, albeit minor. When you scroll down (or clockwise) the iPod's menu, or even down a short playlist, the selection doesn't go round back on top. You have to scroll counterclockwise to go back to the first item or song on the list. It would have been more convenient and logical for the scrolling to go back round since the scroll pad is circular, hence you should go back round the top when you reach the end of a list.

This brings us to the interface of the iPod.

Not much can be said about how the buttons operate—you'd have to be technologically hopeless to get lost in the controls of the iPod. Switching from one song to another, or from one menu to another using the scroll bar is a breeze, as is switching from volume control to rating or fast forward/rewind.

This leads us to the PDA functions of the iPod. Under the Extras menu, you have your to-do list, calendar, clock, alarms and contacts all managed, again, from iTunes. You can also turn your iPod into an external hard disk drive where you can drag and drop notes and digital photos to save space on those expensive flash memory cards.

Under Extras are games like Brick, Parachute, Solitaire and Music Quiz. And yes, you can play games while playing music.

So that sums up the iPod. The battery life could use some work, but for casual users like me, a full charge lasted me three days on trips to Iloilo, Guimaras and Bacolod, plus another three days in Singapore. This, however, was on a sparing use while on flights or cool-down periods in the hotel room before sleeping. But for Pete's sake, somebody better do something about the heavy battery loss incurred while synching. You have to be able to do this even without a dock.

So is the iPod worth it? For more than P20,000, one can buy a powerful PC instead of an iPod, but for those with cash to burn, by all means burn them and burn your ears listening to the excellent sound quality of this exceptional device.

Leo Magno

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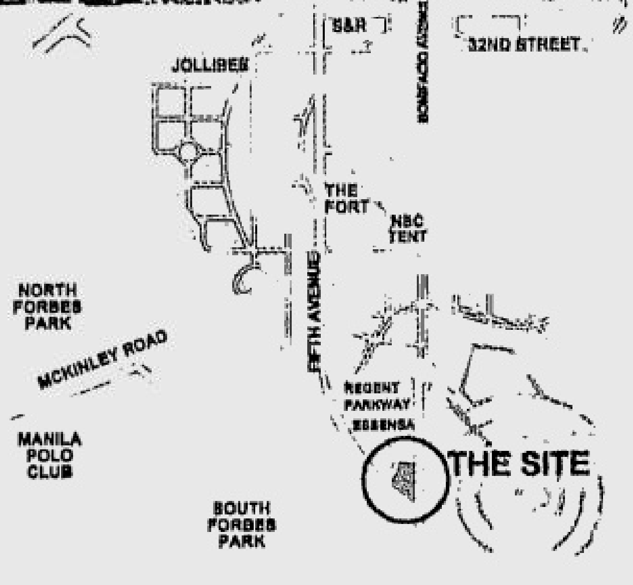
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Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

How local vegetables can compete with imports

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

NEW trends are emerging in the market for vegetables, and they should be understood by businessmen.

The nation imports almost three dozen types of vegetables, including garlic, onions, cabbage and tomatoes. They are normally grown in cooler climates abroad, and are the favored crop too of Benguet, La Trinidad, and the Mountain Province. Hence they are popularly called "Baguio vegetables."

Imports on the rise

One clear trend is growing import volume. Annual imports have swelled seven times the volume seen in 1996, even reaching 37,800 tons in 1999. Every year, vegetable imports rise by an average of 60 percent.

A major reason for the increase is the cut in tariff rates since 1996. The taxes on imported vegetables hovered to only between 3 to 10 percent for much of 2003.

Where did they come from? Last year, 82 percent of the greens were shipped from China, with the rest exported from Taiwan, Australia, and even the Netherlands.

Supermarkets cash in

A second trend is the "changing landscape" for produce marketing. Vegetables used to be sold primarily in the wet markets. Today supermarkets have a produce section, where the goods are neatly packed in plastic bags.

"Meanwhile, rapid urbanization and fast-paced lifestyles have increased the incidence of eating out and thus, have also boosted demand for fresh produce by the food service sector," according to agribusiness specialist Ditas R. Macabasco of the University of Asia and the Pacific. Restaurants and hotels are likewise turning to imports, so as to be assured of quality food.

Salad smuggling

A third trend is that much of the imports are actually smuggled. In 2003 an estimated 408,000 kilos were smuggled per month—an increase of 58 percent from the year before. The smuggled veggies are valued at P732 million.

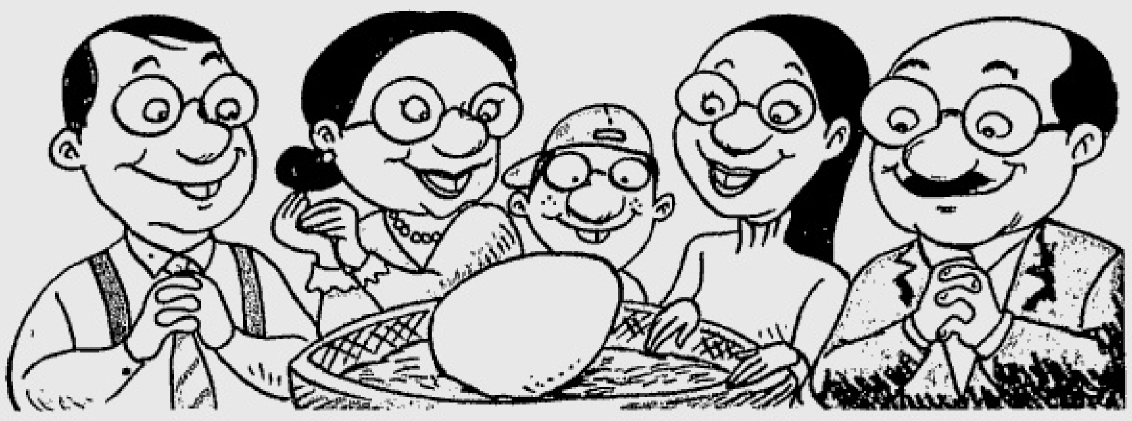
In early 2003, the smuggled produce was estimated to be 11 times the value of legally imported vegetables.

Local farmers from the nation's salad bowls are feeling the impact of the smuggled greens. Trucks of unsold produce return to their farms, and some of the vegetables end up

HOW LOCAL/ B2-3

Pros and cons of a family business

By Myrna R. Co
Contributor; UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries



A FAMILY business has its pros and cons, and you must study these carefully before deciding to do business with a brother, sister or other family members.

Having a family business may sound like an unmixed blessing. You insure employment for yourself and young family members even in a declining, job-tight economy. You man your company with people you know and trust. No need to ask for character references, for police and NBI clearances!

Implicitly, family members are committed and loyal to the business, if only for the long-term stake they have in it. However, what unites a family business can also pull it apart. For good or for ill, family dynamics inevitably impact on the operation of the business.

Horror stories abound about families feuding over money, decisions to grow or not to grow, succession, etc. However, for every sad story, you would find a happy one, with couples and family members swearing that the common enterprise has bonded them more closely together.

Those who plan to set up a family business might wish to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a family enterprise with their partner-relatives. Here are some of them (as gathered from various sources):

Upsides

1. Family members behave as stewards of the business and its capital needs for the benefit of the next generation. So they tend to take a long-term view regarding their investments.

2. Hiring family members means hiring people who are more committed to the success of a business than when they are ordinary employees. When things get tough, they will do whatever is needed to make it work, no matter how difficult.

3. Often a family business defines success not only in terms of profit but also in providing employment and benefits to the community. A business can offer employment to qualified relatives and opportunities to bond with them as well as put cherished beliefs into practice.

4. Other advantages: shared values, improved customer relations through family contact, long-term stability.

Downsides

There is, of course, a downside.

1. A business can be a breeding ground for family problems: jealousy, anger, resentment. There is less reservation about letting feelings out among family members and family problems can easily spill over into the workplace.

2. The manager of a family business may be hard put turning down relatives as employees regardless of lack of qualifications. Relatives who are allowed into the company may abuse family ties and feel that they can under-perform simply because they are relations.

3. Some family members, especially the elderly, may find it difficult to retire and let the younger members take over.

4. Other disadvantages: possible managerial incompetence, lack of exposure to other business, nepotism, inability to separate family and work.

So, assuming that you've decided to go for it after weighing the pros and cons, you need to prepare for your roles. You should look at your family history for clues as to what might happen and prepare for this.

It is possible to avoid potential problems and legal disputes by taking legal steps from the start. There should be a strategy to cope with internal disputes and provide the mechanism for modernization of the business even against the will of the more conservative family members.

Consult a lawyer for the inclusion of an exit strategy that will safeguard its long-term future.

The small enterprise is also typically family-based. There is little difference between the business and the family. Personal and business problems are intertwined so that they are extremely difficult to identify, much less resolve.

Family dynamics inevitably enter into business decisions. Some businesses, for example, are better off if some members of the family left the family business and pursued other career opportunities. But who will tell them off?

(For information about training and publications programs of the UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries, call up Tel. No. 928-7076 to 79 or e-mail info.issi@up.edu.ph)

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Mitsubishi launches new Lancer WRC

MITSUBISHI Motors Corp (MMC) motor sports subsidiary, Mitsubishi Motors Motor Sports (MMSP), recently unveiled the Mitsubishi Lancer WRC04, the car that will spearhead its 2004 FIA World Rally Championship campaign. A completely fresh design, the new car forms an integral part of a meticulously conceived long-term plan to build on Mitsubishi Motor's distinguished record in the World Rally Championship. It will compete on all 16 rounds of the series.

World Rally Car rules demand that the competition car is derived from a family of showroom cars, made in quantities of at least 25,000 per year. The Lancer WRC04 is therefore based on the standard Lancer, but as its dramatic appearance indicates, it has little in common with previous Mitsubishi World Rally Cars. Once again, it draws on Mitsubishi Motors' worldwide resources, combining Japanese and European capabilities, but it reflects a fresh design strategy and has been created by a new, youthful engineering team. The project has been overseen by MMSP Limited managing director Mario Fornaris at MMSP's base in Rugby, Great Britain.

MMSP will treat the 2004 season as a learning process, in which it creates a car and a driving team ready for success in the years ahead. For that reason, it has gone back to first principles to create a Lancer World Rally Car that is a sound basis for a rally winner in all conditions. 2004 will be an exercise first and foremost in laying the foundations for future success.

"The car is quite different from our previous World Rally Car. We have made something like 6,000 new parts. We have taken advantage of the freedom permitted by the World Rally Car regulations, but my philosophy is to do very simple things and to have a good understanding of the car before we introduce more advanced systems," Fornaris explained.

The Lancer WRC04's appearance reflects the increasing importance of aerodynamics in World Championship rallying. MMSP spent almost three weeks testing in the Lola racing team's wind tunnel, redesigning the bonnet, along with the front and rear wings, as well as the rear aerofoil. In designing the chassis, the emphasis has been not just on good handling, but on strength, simplicity and ease of maintenance. The car uses MacPherson strut suspension all round. It is a robust system and to make servicing straightforward, components are often interchangeable not only front and rear, but left to right as well. Most suspension components will be made of steel, to ensure reliability.

The 16-valve, twin-cam, two-liter engine belongs to the 4G6 family used so successfully in previous Lancers. It employs the well-proven cast iron block and an aluminum alloy cylinder head, but it has also benefited from significant alteration. First and foremost, it is based on the version of the engine fitted to the new and highly popular Lancer Evo VIII showroom car, but with a new turbocharger, fitted with the regulation 34-millimeter intake restrictor, new intake and exhaust manifolds, and new internals. Although the bore and stroke remain unchanged, the crankshaft, connecting rods and pistons have been lightened and the electronic management systems are new. MMSP has turned to Magneti Marelli to supply its electronics for the first time, using an advanced engine management package that doesn't rely on fuses or circuit breakers.

The transmission also reflects MMSP's new strategy and has nothing in common with the four-wheel-drive systems used on previous Lancers. The 2004 car will use a transversely mounted five-speed gearbox supplied by Ricardo. The gearchange will be manual and all three differentials will be passive, an epicyclic center differential splitting torque front to rear. The front and rear differentials will also operate on mechanical principles.

The decision to use passive differentials is unusual, but reflects MMSP's determination to ensure that the chassis is fundamentally sound and effective before introducing refinements.

Brembo will supply brakes, and once again MMSP is placing the accent on simplicity. The braking system will not incorporate water-cooling initially.

The Lancer WRC04 began testing in mid-October and will undergo a comprehensive development program in readiness for its first appearance on the 2004 Monte Carlo Rally, when French star Gilles Panizzi leads an all-new driving team. In its first three months, the new Mitsubishi will face tarmac and ice in Monte Carlo, snow in Sweden, and dusty loose-surface stages in Mexico.

M.O.U. SIGNING

PLDT BRAINS TO BOOST PSE DATA NEEDS

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co and the Philippine Stock Exchange recently signed a memorandum of agreement regarding the use of PLDT's Brains IP VPN service for the data needs of the PSE. The Brains-or Broad and Robust ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) and Internet Protocol Networking Solutions network has cost-effective IP VPN (Internet Protocol-Virtual Private Network) service that is perfect for the voluminous data traffic of the PSE. Shown during the signing ceremonies are, from left, Katrina C. Luna, business head, PLDT convergence group, Ernest Leung, president, PSE, Manuel V. Pangilinan, president and CEO, PLDT, Alicia Rita M. Arroyo, chair PSE, Eric R. Alberto, group head, PLDT corporate business group, and Ed P. Ocampo, chief technology officer, PSE.

DSAP WELCOMES PRICE CUT ON ETHICAL DRUG

With its mission to promote the value and role of drugstores in the health care system, the 1,527 active member Drug Stores Association of the Philippines (DSAP) applauded the move of Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) to lower the cost of its cholesterol lowering drug simvastatin effective Sept. 1. MSD, the pharmaceutical company who introduced statin in the country in 1992, has made its statin drug more affordable by offering as much as 57-percent savings on the new price. This potentially translates to better health care for Filipinos who now have better access to simvastatin in the over 4,000 drugstore outlets of DSAP. DSAP-accredited drugstores continues to collaborate for the advancement of patient care in the country by broadening the reach of the MSD Patient Care Pharmacy Redemption Program. DSAP president Gloria de Chavez (3rd from right), congratulates MSD's cardiovascular business unit director Stephanie Merida. With them are, from left, DSAP's director John Inocencio and auditor Celia Carlos, MSD corporate affairs director Christine Liwanag, DSAP's VP external Bhoyett Vizconde and VP internal Emilene Ablaza.

Electrolux spreads goodwill

ELECTROLUX Philippines Inc gives back to the community with its ongoing humanitarian campaign to help charitable institutions and foundations fulfill their mission of giving an enjoyable and fuller life to those that are deprived. Through its White-Westinghouse by Electrolux CARE (Caring Action in Responsible Efforts) for the Society program, Electrolux helps spread the message of goodwill and hope to the community, most especially to the children.

As the celebration of Christmas nears, Electrolux Philippines Inc aims to inspire other individuals and corporate citizens to also follow the examples of the Three Magis as they bring gifts to our Savior. Electrolux, through this inspiration, scouted several institutions housing children and brought them gifts that would uplift and help them lead an enjoyable and easier life.

With 7 million unfortunate children in Manila alone, foundations and charitable institutions are incapacitated to provide all of their residents' need. WE-CARE for the society program understands this need and wants to share in their mission of giving a home to the orphaned and abandoned and try to make their lives more comfortable and the institutions task of caring for them easier.

The WE-CARE Team has nominated Boys' Town Complex as well as Pangarap Foundation to be part of their initial recipients. Boys' Town Complex is a safe haven for young, homeless boys helping to provide a roof and a home to these children as well as to the city's ambulatory aged residents. Pangarap Foundation, on the other hand, provides shelter to numerous street children with a homelike atmosphere and hones them to become responsible members of the society and of God's Kingdom.

With millions of children in the country searching for a home to give them shelter and love, remember the baby in the manger whose parents also knocked on doors looking for a home for their baby. Electrolux hopes that through this effort some of these children will get to celebrate Christmas with a smile and hope in their hearts.

ROTARY CLUB OF OR
HEALTHWAY
AND THE ASSN. OF BUILDING
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HEALTHWAY, RC OF ORTIGAS CONDUCT MEDICAL MISSION

Healthway Medical Clinics, the most extensive mall-based outpatient network of clinics in the country, and the Rotary Club of Ortigas recently conducted a medical mission for security personnel and maintenance workers in the Ortigas area. Healthway's primary care physicians provided consultation and chest x-ray examination to improve the health status of these workers in the area. Part of the medical mission initiated by the Rotary Club is the provision of medicine to workers diagnosed with abnormal findings as well as follow-up consultations with Healthway's doctors. For inquiries on Healthway's services, call 892-3731 or 751-4985.

sulong
EDUKASYON!

TSP-TSK TURNOVER AT ILUGIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Ilugin Elementary School recently received a deed of donation amounting to P75,080 worth of books from the Bato Balani Foundation Inc, courtesy of Eli Lilly (Philippines) Inc. The TSP-TSK turnover ceremony was held at the Lilly Learning Center of the school Aug. 27. Present during the turnover were, from left, Nelia G. Castillo, principal of Ilugin Elementary School, Iluminada C. Lerio, coordinating principal of the Pasig Elementary School, Dr. Abella C. Macarandan, schools division superintendent, Josephine F. Concepcion, HR director of Eli Lilly Philippines Inc, Juanito T. Calditaran, BBFI program director, Rowena Perez of Belgosa Media Systems, and Rodrigo Asilo, Barangay Chair of Pinagbuhatan, Pasig.

RASA OPENS DOORS AT THE COLISEUM CIRCLE

Rasa, the hottest dining destination offering authentic Singaporean cuisine, recently opened its doors to diners at the cosmopolitan Coliseum Circle at the Araneta Center in Quezon City. A franchisee of Singapore's most popular restaurant, Prima Taste, Rasa uses only ingredients directly flown from Singapore. The Rasa team, headed by restaurant manager Marvin Coronado, was trained in the Merlion City to whip up the most spicy, aromatic and exquisite Singaporean dishes. Singapore is a melting pot of Chinese, Indonesian, Malay and Indian influences. Rasa is open daily and serves diners from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. It offers a casual dining ambiance and has a 100-person seating capacity. Customers can also order take-outs and experiment with Singaporean recipes with the ready-to-cook pastes available for sale. Shown at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were (from left) Rocson Chang, area director of Singapore Tourism, Teofilo R. Asuncion Jr, president of Araneta Center Inc, Paul Koh, Charge d'Affairs of the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore, Judy Araneta-Roxas, senior executive vice president of Araneta Group, Pax Maghacot, representative of Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Lewis Cheng, general manager of Prima Food and Jason Leong, International Enterprise of the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore.

Martel gets 2 awards in 1 day

BUSINESSWOMAN and philanthropist Belen Lovina Ticzon-Martel recently added two more awards to her mantle. She was recognized as most outstanding business executive leader of the Philippines by the board of directors, members and officers of the Luzon Visayas and Mindanao Information Research Magazine Aug. 31 at the Sampaguita Room of the Manila Hotel, the same day she was named outstanding entrepreneur of the year: best in service by the National Biographic and National Research at the Narra Room of the Bayview Park Hotel, Manila.

She is the chair of Belco Marketing Inc and executive vice president of Harrison Plaza.

Martel is the daughter of corporate lawyer and philanthropist Romeo Reyes Ticzon Sr and Encarnacion "Nena" Lovina and the granddaughter of statesman and banker Don Primitivo "Tibing" Lovina Sr and Dona Ruperta Herrero Lovina.

She was chosen DECS' most outstanding coed of Metro Manila in 1973 for excellent performance in academics and community service. She graduated summa cum laude, Bachelor of Science in Commerce major in Marketing from St. Paul College.

Despite her achievements, her sources of pride and joy is husband Antonio V. Martel Jr, president of Harrison Plaza and daughter Antonia, an incoming sophomore and consistent scholar at Jesuit-run Fordham University in Manhattan, New York.

ProductFILES

Dostdy Hof reflects South African adventures

THE MERE mention of South Africa conjures tantalizing images of safari life and other primal adventures. A cursory romp through this country's vast landscape is enough to give one a spectacular glimpse of its rich cultural heritage, as well as its rare varieties of flora and fauna.

There's more than one way to appreciate this kaleidoscopic landscape, though. Indeed, this country offers a wide selection of natural highs. But of all the discoveries one may explore in this savage paradise, nothing is more exciting than to actually taste the fruits of the land. One of these is an exquisite wine variety nurtured by Cape Wineland's perfect climate and its long history of winemaking tradition.

Winemaking is South Africa originated from the early Dutch settlers more than 350 years ago. Through the years, such varieties as Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz and Pinotage have earned its rightful niche in the global arena. No less than the great Napoleon Bonaparte requested for 'Cape' wine while in prison. Currently, South Africa is pegged as the world's eighth largest wine producer.

Drostdy Hof Wines are a reflection of such world-renowned wines. Produced by the biggest winery in South Africa, Distell Limited, its excellent quality and reasonable prices enable it to penetrate the European and Asian markets, including the Philippines. Drostdy Hof wines' remarkable varieties represent genuine South African adventures and explorers. To experience all these exciting Drostdy Hof varieties is like embarking on an authentic African safari, a fulfilling journey of self-discovery.

In search of a good national leader

(2nd of three parts)

MAPping the Future

Edward L. Fereira

ONCE again, what kind of leader is needed?

It is therefore time to revisit the question: What kind of leader do we need, in these troubled times, in this country? What kind of country CEO should we elect in May 2004 who can regain control of the ship, avoid the giant whirlpool of oblivion and steer us finally to our place in the sun?

The article entitled "In Search of a Virtuous, Competent, Just and Healing President" published in the INQUIRER a few months ago written by Rex Drilon II, one of our members in the MAP, focused on the qualities of this leader that we are looking for. Allow me to quote liberally from his paper, since I have his permission to do so.

The next CEO of this Republic must be a person of Character, must be Competent, must have a strong sense of Community and must be fully prepared and Committed to the huge task of uniting and rebuilding this country.

Character

The president to be elected in May 2004 must be a person of outstanding character. This is normally manifested in this person's vision and mission in life and the values and beliefs he or she holds dear. Stephen Covey's 7 Habits* and Peter Senge's measures of Personal Mastery** describe this person.

He or she maintains a circle of friends and associates who model what is true, good and beautiful. They have integrity, they walk their talk. They live with a passion for servant leadership. They are ethical—for them, the ends never justify the means.

They live wholesome family lives and share a hard work ethic. The virtuous president is a role model in his or her family or professional life. He or she is a person with a strong faith in God and is unconditionally committed to the democratic process.

Competencies

The competent president is not only an excellent manager but also an outstanding leader. He or she is a user of technology, analytical, a conceptual thinker, a creative producer, a mentor-teacher-coach, entrepreneurial, articulate and an intellectual giant.

The body of knowledge never ceases to expand and there is a distinct ability to see both the forest and the trees. He/she is a natural in alliance building, partnering and is a skilled negotiator.

In the mold of Peter Drucker, the competent and effective president is (1) an excellent time manager, (2) focuses on results rather than efforts, (3) builds on the strengths of his or her people and makes their weaknesses irrelevant, (4) prioritizes, (5) produces outstanding results and (6) makes effective decisions consistently.

The competent president is experienced and recognized with an outstanding track record in good governance—whether in the executive, legislative or judiciary branch of government or in business and civil society.

Sense of community

The giving president is a "person for others" and spends a significant amount of personal time and resources for personal philanthropy, volunteer work, environmental and community concerns.

He or she is biased for the just and fair treatment of workers—whether in the household or in the workplace with a special preferential attitude for the poor, the disabled, the disadvantaged and the elderly.

He or she is the best model for Team Philippines and Team Planet Earth—a peacemaker, a healer, fighter for the environment and a champion of justice.

Commitment

The virtuous, competent and giving president passionately pursues the vision of a people that is truly free, democratic, God-loving, patriotic, disciplined, united and with a strong sense of community. The official family, led by this president, models the national value system.

He or she runs the country well. The long-term development plan captures the hopes and aspirations of the Filipino people. Governance at the national and local levels are characterized by transparency, accountability, efficiency and decency.

The electoral process ensures replacement of the incompetent and the corrupt in government. Economic development and improvement of the quality of life are twin priorities of government. Inflation is tamed, allowing even the disadvantaged to afford a decent existence. The people are secure in a peaceful, orderly and just society. There is equal opportunity for all, a level playing field.

A free market environment is maintained to ensure that the efficient are duly rewarded and the inefficient culled and penalized. In parallel, the law-abiding citizens are given priorities in the fruits of development while the corrupt, the tax-evaders, the opportunists and the criminal elements are deprived of such fruits.

He or she finally unites the Philippines. The 60 percent of the Philippine society living above the poverty line reach out, without exception, to the 40 percent who live below the line, particularly the poorest of the poor, the handicapped and the elderly.

Christians and non-Christians coexist in peace and harmony. The alleviation of poverty and the provision of basic human needs such as food, shelter, education, security and justice are a national, collective effort of all sectors of Philippine society. Protecting the environment is a national pastime. Paying taxes is viewed as an act of patriotism.

And, yes, the president of the Philippines come July 2004, must be a global citizen."

And so, the future CEO of this country must have Character, must be Competent and must have a sense of Country. But the picture is not complete. It is important, yes, that we define the qualities and the attributes of a good president who should be a good leader.

But it is far more important, though, that we define the roles of a successful president and the behaviors corresponding to those roles. By adding this dimension, we focus on the job of the president and avoid the risk of being accused of being partisan and favoring or alluding to particular candidates especially since at least one or two candidates will definitely not measure up to the qualities and attributes I have described earlier.

PMAP initiative

Fortunately for this country, the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) has taken the lead to conduct a study on the Success Profile of a President, the results of which should greatly help the Filipino people in the selection process during our make-or-break elections in May 2004.

Hopefully, aspiring presidential candidates can find time to reflect on the results of this research and do a soul-searching assessment as to whether or not he or she can indeed meet the demands of the job of president in the various roles that he or she has to perform.

Led by Grace Abella-Zata, a group of HR professionals in PMAP started the research project earlier this year and earlier this month, they reported to the National Convention of PMAP in Cebu City the results of their work-in-progress. The team was trained in competency analysis methodology by SGV- Development Dimensions Inc. who also shared their framework on leadership.

The research included primary and secondary data sources and interviews with people who have or had ringside views of the presidency and those who continually study this institution. These included, among others, former presidents, the Senate President, the Chief Justice, the Comelec chairman, former Cabinet secretaries, a publisher, a university president, political analysts and observers, members of the Malacañang press and other dignitaries in Manila and Cebu.

The results went through a vetting process among selected PMAP members and representatives of professional associations which are members of the Philippine Movement for Good Governance led by the MAP numbering more than a hundred professional managers and business men and women.

The PMAP research team suggests that a successful CEO of this country has a minimum of five roles to perform: as navigator-strategist, as mobilizer, as servant leader, as captivator and as guardian of the national wealth and patrimony.

(The author is president of MAP and president and CEO of Ferycor International Management Group, Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

How local vegetables . . .

From page B2-1

being burned or turned into fertilizer.

Ironically, action sought by the farmers may have unleashed the wave of smuggling, according to industry officials. The farmers lobbied for higher tariff walls and got the nod of Malacañang in this pre-election year. In April 2003, Executive Order 197 hiked the tariff on vegetables to 25 percent.

Domestic production could not keep up with domestic demand. Last year, local output was 11,290 tons of vegetables a month. This was lacking, leaving an unmet demand of 21,043 tons a month. Shady entrepreneurs thus found a way to supply the goods via smuggling.

Professionalize agri marketing

Should the state keep vegetable tariffs high? That will just prolong the smuggling problem, given that the Philippines is an archipelago with very porous borders. It is also likely that the high tariffs will go down after the elections.

The better course is to make Filipino produce competitive with the imports. Recall that the prices of imported greens are burdened by shipping costs. Why then should they end up cheaper than locally grown food?

Entrepreneurs will just have to professionalize the marketing of the veggies. Supermarkets are reported to prefer the imports because they arrive on time, are better packaged, and have a longer shelf life. And yes, all that means higher quality.

Farm goods from the provinces have to put up with packing and handling stress, thus harming their shelf life. Notice how baskets cramp the produce, while the plastic crates used for imports provide more breathing space.

"Each time vegetables are handled they are subjected to more damage and losses," said Dr. Merl Menegay, agribusiness advisor of the Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) program. GEM is funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

"Shipping vegetables in the tropical climate of the Philippines without the benefit of pre-cooling and refrigerated transport, also leads to rapid deterioration," he added. "These adverse handling, packing, and transportation practices not only result in lower quality but also cause sizeable losses between the farm gate and final consumer."

Link together

Filipino entrepreneurs would thus do well to create cold chains, leasing refrigerated vans and plastic crates, linking the local farmers with institutional buyers. This is already practiced by firms in Bukidnon.

There is money to be made by pursuing the said route. A company called Basic Necessities Inc. (BNI) supplies the Shangri-La hotels with high-quality lettuce sourced from Cavite. It sells the greens at P80 per kilo, in contrast to the P250 per kilo price of the imports.

Compete with the imports. Set up those cold chains.

(Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com>)

Tips on toasting

From page B2-4

to stand but all the guests will remain seated. At an informal event, spontaneous toasts may be offered by any of the guests.

Welcoming toast

This toast will occur at the beginning of the event or the meal.

The host will stand if it's a formal occasion or there's a large group.

The host may select champagne for the welcoming toast, or may use wine.

The host will toast all guests, welcoming them to the occasion, by holding the glass, proposing the toast, raising his glass, then sipping the champagne or wine.

The guests will all raise their glasses, when the host raises his, and then sip their champagne or wine.

Toasting the guest of honor

This toast is the gracious gesture that honors or recognizes a special person in attendance. The host is the first person to offer this toast (if there will be more than one toast honoring the guest of honor)

The toast occurs after the entrée is finished and before desert.

At a formal dinner the host will stand, holding a glass of wine, and face the guest of honor. On that signal all others, except the guest of honor, will also stand, holding a glass of wine, and face the honored guest. The host will offer the toast, which should be short.

At the end of the toast, the host and everyone standing will raise their wineglass and then takes a sip.

It's not necessary to "clink glasses" before sipping the wine. But should you find yourself at a table where this is occurring, politely participate.

A simple toast - "To your health"

This is always a brief and appropriate toast, and can be used at even the most casual gathering. If you travel to other countries or host people from other nationalities than your own, learning the correct translation and pronunciation for this will be a nice toast to use for any occasion.

The following are several translations for this phrase.

French - *A Votre Sante*
German - *Prosit*
Italian - *Salute*
Spanish - *Salud*

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BUSINESS *Monday*

Tips on toasting

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

COULD you please give me some tips on toasting? I always find myself at a loss of words when I have to make a toast. Is it absolutely necessary to make a toast? Please give me some tips on etiquette regarding this subject. We normally host foreign principals here in Manila. This happens at least once a month.

When you offer a toast you are adding a special touch to the occasion you are hosting. You offer a toast in order to acknowledge the reason for the event and/or give special recognition to one of the guests.

Offering a "toast" is a gracious way to welcome guests, to recognize someone's accomplishments, and to honor a person on their special day. It's a gesture that adds a special touch to any occasion, even a casual get together.

The tradition of "toasting" dates back centuries. The Greeks and Romans toasted their pagan gods, and early Norsemen toasted each other for success before going into battle.

A toast is a moment within the celebration that focuses everyone's attention. And since the process includes everyone, I'll go over the details for you.

Host

If you're the host or hostess for the event, you'll have the responsibility to make the welcoming toast, if there is one, and the first toast recognizing the guest of honor.

At a formal event, you will stand and pause to get everyone's attention. Then looking at the person to whom you are offering a toast, with your wine or champagne glass in hand and propose the toast. When you have finished the toast, raise your glass and then take a sip from your glass. The process should be short, but dignified. Remember that after two minutes, guests stop listening to what you have to say, so keep it short and simple.

At certain formal occasions, such as State dinners and wedding receptions, the toasts are part of the protocol for that event. This protocol will identify who makes what toasts and when they are made. This structure is critical for orchestrating the correct order that must be followed.

Guest of Honor

If you're the guest of honor at the event, you'll always remain seated as you're being recognized by a toast. And you will not drink any wine when the toast is made.

Keep your eyes on the person who is toasting you.

When the host's toast honoring you is finished; you, in turn, will offer your own toast back to the host/hostess.

Other Guests

At a formal affair, all the guests except the guest of honor will stand for toasting the guest of honor. At a less formal event, the host may stand to offer the toast, but the other guests will remain seated.

When a toast is being proposed, look at the person being honored. You should have your wine or champagne glass in your hand, and when the toast is completed and the host raises his glass, you should also raise your glass. Then you take a sip from your wineglass.

Types of toasts

Traditionally there are two types of toasts that will occur at most functions—the welcoming toast and toasts recognizing the guest or guests of honor. At formal affairs, the host and the guests will stand. At informal or casual affairs and in many restaurant settings, the host may chose

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GLX	750,000	112,500	54,220	37,389	29,752	21,376	17,475	14,846
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THE PODIUM CINEMA
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CHANGED MAN. Jeffrey now (above) wants his own son to have the privacy he didn't have as the son of Dolphy (middle at right, with Jeffrey's brother Eric).

Jeffrey: I'm not angry at my dad anymore

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

ACTOR Jeffrey Quizon wants his 9-year-old son to have the privacy that he himself, as the son of comedy king Dolphy, did not have.

Jeffrey, also known as Epi, is so protective of his son that he doesn't even want to give the child's name.

"But if I meet you outside and I'm with my son," Epi told INQUIRER Entertainment, "and you ask me if he's my son, I'll even introduce you and probably tell you his name.

"I don't want to talk about him because I want to give him the right to privacy that I didn't have when I was growing up," he explained. "Being the son of Dolphy, people knew me although I wasn't an actor yet. I grew up a brat. *Nasa palasyo kami, may mga* bodyguard. Everything was spoon-fed to me. I was living the life of a prince. But I grew up with angst about my dad having other families."

Jeffrey, actor-director Eric Quizon, musician Ronnie and a girl who is not in show biz are Dolphy's children with former starlet Pamela Ponti (real name, Alice Smith).

Jeffrey said that coming from a broken family affected him so much that "I grew up with a very violent mentality and I don't know where it came from."

"*Marami akong sama ng loob na nagma*-manifest. Like for example, *konting alaska lang sa akin, nakikipag-suntukan ako*. I was such a war-freak."

When he was in high school in La Salle, where he studied from grade four to college, Jeffrey had a bad fight with a member of his football team. "*Binasag ko 'yung bote at sasaksakin ko na siya*," he said.

The worst, said Jeffrey, was when he cocked a gun at someone he didn't really know, with intention to kill. He said he used to carry his dad's gun with him, but that the comedy king didn't know about his violent exploits.

"Honestly, *nakalimutan ko na ang galit sa* daddy *ko*," Jeffrey said. "Eventually I realized that it was his life and that whatever I do, he'll always be my father."

Joining the Days with the Lord retreat program in March 1992 helped him open his eyes, Jeffrey confessed. "I got to know God more. *Doon nag*-mellow *'yung* hatred *na 'di ko talaga alam kung kanino*. Then I realized that it wasn't the life that I wanted to live."

Jeffrey, now 30, first joined show business when he was 17. "But I didn't like the lifestyle then," he recalled. "So I continued my studies (he's just a few units shy of a degree in A.B. Humanities). I visited several art centers. *Namumundok ako* before *na* camera *lang ang dala ko at saka dalawang* t-shirt, briefs *at* saka socks. When I returned to show business a few years ago, I worked behind the camera as writer and assistant director to Eric."

Stardom finally found him when he played the role of the teenage Walter Dempster (with Eric as the adult and Dolphy as the old one) in "Markova," Gil Portes' film on comfort gays during the Japanese occupation. Acting awards and more movie projects poured in for Jeffrey.

He's a changed man now, said Jeffrey, who plays the half-man, half-rat villain Dagampatay in "Captain Barbell," Premiere Productions' entry to the Metro Manila Film Festival.

"*Iba na ang pananaw ko sa buhay*," he shared. "I'm goal-driven now. Before, I didn't have an ambition.

"But I'm not totally good. I still make mistakes. Unknowingly, I hurt other people. *Hindi ako magmamalinis na* I've totally changed."

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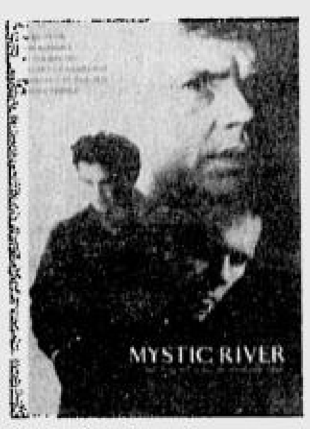

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Friends Inc. in special show at Chaquicos

SHOW TIME

THE RETRO pop band Friends Inc., featuring Marri Nallos, will have a special show at Chaquicos on Makati Avenue in Makati City tonight, Dec. 22, at 9 p.m.

Friends Inc. is composed of lead vocalist Marri, who is the voice behind the revival of the Air Supply song "Making Love Out of Nothing at All"; Zoe Zuñiga, the well-travelled male vocalist who comes from the family of singers led by pop icon Nonoy Zuñiga; and Donna Martinez, who is also from a musical clan.

The back-up musicians of Friends Inc. are all session artists led by Mon Pestaño—who is the group's technical director—on drums, musical arranger Rey Martinez on keyboards, and Mack Matubis on bass.

Friends Inc.'s repertoire will include songs from Marri's self-titled album as well as Top 40 hits and dance tunes of today and yesteryears.

Marri's album is being distributed by Universal Records.

To promote her album, Marri will be in Sinturisan, San Nicolas, Batangas, on Dec. 27 together with Friends Inc.

Next year, Marri will also do mall and provincial tours.

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Living Asia Channel projects region at its best

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE first viewed the unique programs of Isla, The Alternative Channel, some months ago, and were immediately taken by their cultural and travel features. We find them a welcome alternative to the commercial, show biz stuff we usually see on the tube.

The good news is that more viewers will now be able to watch Isla's features. Starting right after the Christmas holidays, Filipinos in the US and Canada can view Isla's shows on the new Living Asia Channel on Globecast World TV, a satellite TV service for Asians and Western Europeans in North America.

Isla is the only channel on local TV dedicated to telecasting the advocacy initiatives of the government, the private sector and civil society organizations. So, its productions have greater substance than usual, and can thus give viewers abroad a more dynamic view of Philippine realities.

Carlos G. Abrera, chair of CCI Asia Television Inc. (CATV), US-based subsidiary of CCI Asia Group Corp., describes Living Asia Channel as a 24-hour English language channel specifically targeting second and third generation Filipinos, other Asians, and North American audiences interested in Asian travel and lifestyles.

Proudly Philippine-made, it will telecast programs showcasing the best of Asian destinations, culture, cuisine, fashion, people and issues.

The program categories include:

Travel Asia, offering valuable tips and information needed by travelers to Asia to get the best of what the region has to offer, with its blend of the ancient and the modern.

Young Asia, focusing on the region as it takes its place in the global community as the most important market today.

Advocacy Asia, telecasting positive developmental news and tackling issues geared toward empowering people and communities to contribute to nation-building.

Trade Asia, featuring Asians' innate business sense, their innovations and unique way of doing business.

Classified Asia, offering opportunities in business, investment and trade in the region.

For sponsors targeting Filipinos overseas, the North American exposure is around 600,000 Filipino homes.

In the Philippines, Isla, another product of CCI Asia Television, is carried by cable operators with over a million subscribers in Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan and Northern Luzon, and is shown by free UNF and UHF channels that have 95-percent penetration in the Mega Manila area.

Feedback

FROM **Claire Postigo** of Quezon City: "I agree with you that the way that the young finalists on 'Starstruck' are being eliminated is too harsh, but I think the idea is to toughen them up, so they will survive in the highly competitive world of local show biz. But it would still be better if the finalists' psychological welfare is taken into consideration. The show should consult a psychologist and ask him to counsel the young finalists, and to make sure they don't get too depressed when eliminated . . ."

Dream jets

MOST travelers have to content themselves with flying economy, which generally means being strapped down to functional seats in restricting spaces for hours on end. At 9 p.m. on Dec. 23, the National Geographic Channel introduces a whole new world of glamorous and princely jet travel with its "Dream Jets—Flying Palaces" feature. The show takes an intimate look at the world's most luxurious large-cabin aircraft, and the wealthy people who have had them modified and customized on an unlimited budget.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd owns a three-storey Boeing 747 that includes an elevator, throne room, fully equipped operating room complete with satellite hook-up to the Cleveland Clinic Heart Center—and a "Mecca Compass" that tells him which way to face when he prays!

Other flying palaces are equipped with advanced avionics and an array of hidden weapons systems. With price tags as high as $125 million, they're also the most expensive!

DID YOU KNOW...

A motorcycle dealer threatened to file charges against "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas" star **Jericho Rosales** after the actor reportedly issued a bouncing check to buy a motorcycle worth half a million pesos. To avoid any legal tussle, Echo returned the down payment as well as the motorcycle, which he had already used for a couple of months.

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Dec.29 - 4:30pm, 8pm
Dec.30 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm
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Jan. 2 - 4:30pm, 8pm
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Jan. 4 - 1pm, 4:30pm, 8pm

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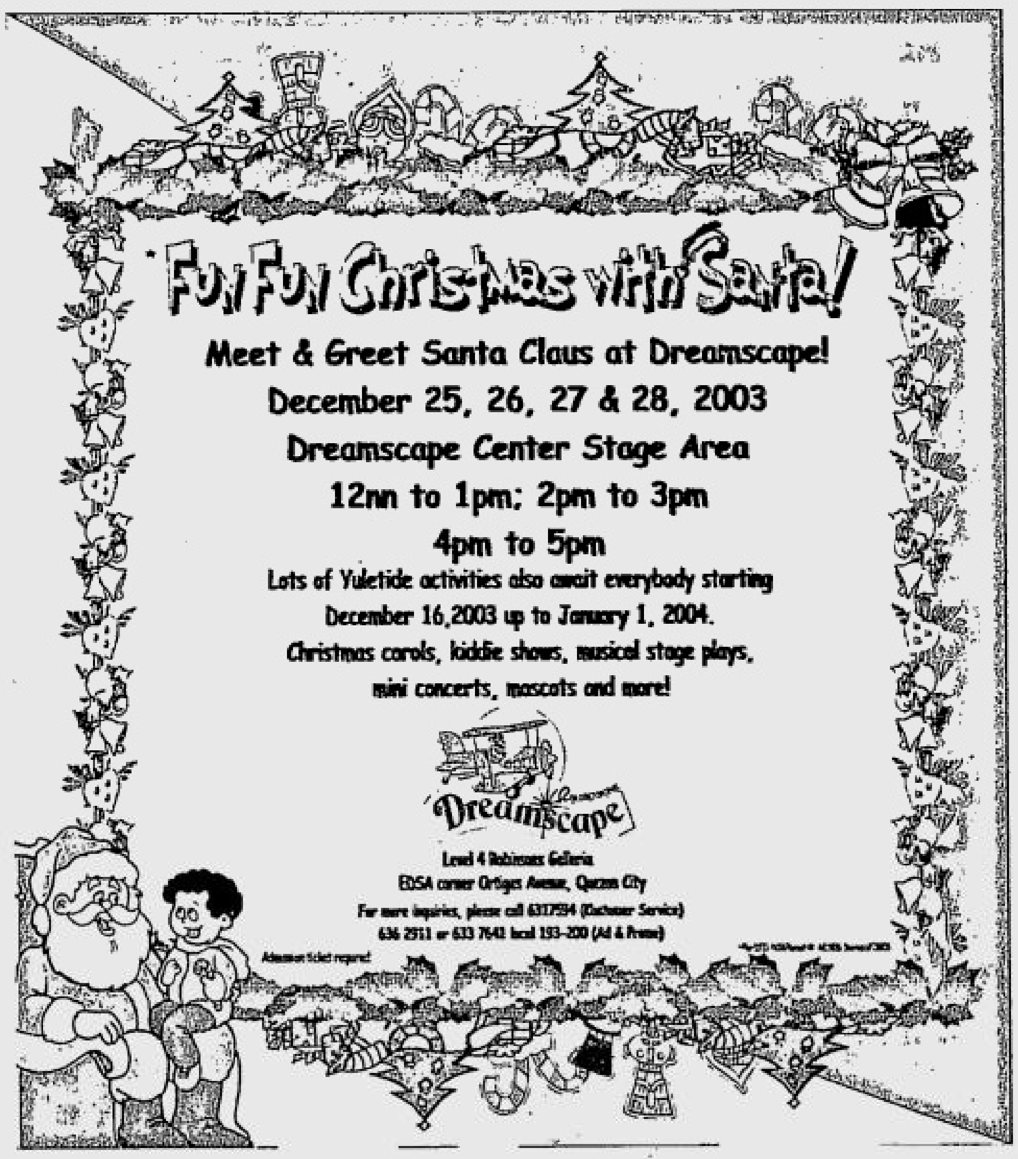

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Abangan mamaya, 10:30 p.m.
STUDIO 23

ENTERTAINMENT

Sharon's Christmas EP features Jim Brickman

MEGASTAR Sharon Cuneta adds spark to the season with her new Christmas extended-play (EP) album, "Paskong Nagdaan" from BMG Records Pilipinas. The EP's seven tracks include the Christmas single "Paskong Nagdaan," composed by Manila Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Rodel Colmenar and Jonathan Florido, and her version of, Ariel Rivera's "Ngayong Pasko." It also has minus-one tracks of "Paskong Nagdaan" and "Sana Ngayong Pasko."

The EP is available nationwide.

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NO RETURN, NO CONCERT. F4's Jerry Yan, Vanness Wu, Ken Zhu and Vic Zhou won't be in Manila the day after Christmas after all.

CANCELED

Taiwan producers did not pay up

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE PHENOMENALLY popular Taiwanese boy band F4, or Flower 4, will no longer have a one-night full-length Manila concert on Dec. 26.

The show's Taiwanese producers failed to come up with the money to finance the show, according to Chito Cabalu of East West Global Entertainment, a co-producer of the F4 concert.

Cabalu said, the show's Taiwanese producers, DaiBei Production Inc., "did not pay up on the agreed date," prompting East West group to cancel the F4 concert.

Cabalu said DaiBei Productions also failed to secure the necessary working permits for the performers.

"We were supposed to work on the permits last Friday (Dec. 19)," Cabalu told INQUIRER Entertainment on Saturday. "But he didn't show up. Now all the offices are closed for the holidays."

East West was also responsible for the staging of American singer Mariah Carey's "Charmbracelet World Tour" and the "MTV Summit 2004" at the Fort open field in Taguig City. The "F4 Live Happy New Year 2004" concert was supposed to be held at the same venue.

Cabalu said DaiBei Productions also failed to comply with the security requirements of the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC). "We needed a certain amount to be able to hire bodyguards and ushers for the concert," Cabalu explained. "Lawrence Lo (DaiBei Productions head) kept questioning our quotations."

Cabalu said a specific amount was also needed to pay for the sound system, stage, barricades, chairs and portalets.

"What I don't understand is why he (Lo) is having trouble producing the money when he is well aware that mounting a full-length F4 concert is no joke," Cabalu said.

It would have been the first time in two years that all four F4 members—Jerry Yan, Vic Zhou, Ken Zhu and Vanness Wu—would perform in one show as a group.

Tickets to the "F4 Live Happy New Year 2004" concert were priced at P10,000, P8,000, P7,500, P5,000, P3,000, P2,500, P1,500 and P600. Cabalu claimed that tickets to the first two prime areas, where tickets were P20,000 and P15,000, had been mostly reserved or bought by about 500 fans from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and Indonesia.

N'Sync on Christmas

THE DISNEY Channel presents "N'Sync Pop Odyssey," the high-tech concert featuring one of the world's hottest pop groups, on Christmas Day at 3 p.m.

N'Sync literally bursts on stage at the Super Dome in New Orleans amidst a spectacle of pyrotechnics, laser lights and other special effects. The main feature, of course, remains N'Sync's music, including hits from their multi-platinum "Celebrity" album.

Disney Channel will also feature exclusive video and backstage footage of the group.

SERENDIPITY SHOW features (from left) Jed Maddela, Bituin Escalante and Anna Fegi.

Bituin and other stars in Discovery celebration

ON DEC. 31, the Serendipity Lounge of Discovery Suites celebrates New Year's Eve with Bituin Escalante, Anna Fegi and Jed Maddela, and musical director Bond Samson in "Just Had to be New Year's Eve—A Crossover Lounge Series Special."

Bituin, Anna and Jed will serenade the crowd with tunes from Broadway as well as the hits of Barbra Streisand, Burt Bacharach, Frank Sinatra and Henry Mancini.

For ticket inquiries, call Ticketworld at 891-5610, Discovery Suites at 635-2222, or Crossover at 712-9755 and 712-9764.

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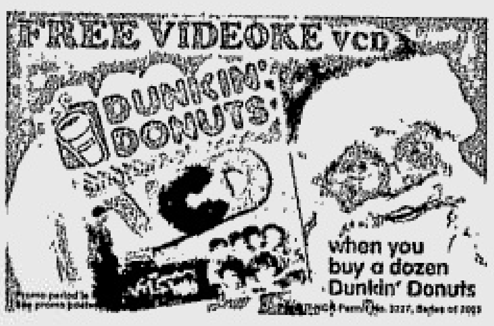
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'Aparador' —a treasure trove of 'lola' stories

APARADOR NI LOLA
PAST LIVES, PRECIOUS OBJECTS
Edited by Emmie G. Velarde

Grandmothers tell the best stories. But their own lives are beautiful, breathtaking tales

"I WAS wheeling my grandmother to the treatment room when she suddenly cried, 'Stop!' I bent over to ask what was wrong."

Writer and civic worker Lolita Delgado-Fansler paused to explain: "This was a woman dying of cancer." Meaning, the least likely response she expected from her ward was what she heard: "You have to bring me back to my room. I don't have my earrings, and you have to powder my nose!"

Delgado-Fansler was referring to her late grandmother, Concepcion Calupitan Chuidian. More precisely, she was telling the story of the grandmother's *aparador* (closet, armoire), which she had converted into a jazzy, if quaint, home bar after Lola Cion was gone. She also recounted how her great-grandfather ended up being named Calupitan. All right, what she really talked about, was their relationship as *lola* and *apo*.

Monique Buensalido took the floor next. She described her recently departed granny, whom she called "Mama," as "my playmate, my friend, my refuge." The young Palanca Award-winning writer said her Mama's room was "my hangout, my source of vanilla wafers and chocolates, my sanctuary from annoying brothers."

US Army K-ration

Then it was the turn of journalist and interior designer Myrna Almario-Adriano. She recalled stuff recovered from her Lola Lucia's *aparador* during "a post-mortem inventory," which included "a box of United States Army issue K-ration, all contents intact, including a toothpick, a loaf of Spam sealed in a long tin container, gauze bandages, iodine, Atabrine tablets…"

Almario-Adriano asked her amused listeners, "Do you know what Atabrine tablets are?"

Anna Leah Sarabia, president and executive director of the Women's Media Circle Foundation, next told a hilarious story about her atypical grandmother, Natividad Lerma Almeda Lopez, the first woman judge of Asia.

An admirer sent Judge Lopez a huge sans rival cake, which she decided to divide among her children and grandchildren. The cake would not fit inside the car so the driver put it in the trunk.

"Anticipating our share of the rich treat, we ran to the car when Lola arrived," Sarabia narrated. "Our hearts sank when the driver opened the trunk and we saw the delicious cake swimming in an uncovered vat of *kaning-baboy*!"

The four women gathered with several other writers for a book launch at PowerBooks-Megamall that turned into a story-telling session about grandmothers. They were, in fact, reading from their own entries—punctuating the excerpts with spontaneous remembrances—before a small but appreciative audience of family and friends.

Small wonder. The book was Anvil Publishing's "Aparador ni Lola—Past Lives, Precious Objects."

As the title suggests, the anthology of essays is about grandmothers' closets explored and found overflowing with souvenirs and other tell-tale signs of their life and times.

Better than the movies

Jose Javier Reyes said his *lola* was "more colorful and more interesting" than any character he had created and helped flesh out as a screen playwright and movie director. In the *aparador* of Ignacia "Tating" Andrade, wife of "the original Jose Javier Reyes," they found a secret compartment containing love letters in Spanish, and rendered in beautiful penmanship.

Another Palanca Award winner, Floy Quintos, recalled a vitrine, or curio cabinet, that belonged to his grandmother. But none of the "treasures" there, he said, could compare to a letter that Lola Puring wrote to him shortly before she died.

Artist and writer Jeannie Javelosa, after reading from her work—and confessing that she cried the whole time she was writing it—announced that her first copy of the book would go straight into the hands of her Lola Purita, in the ancestral home in Iloilo.

Celebrated poet, journalist and editor Jose "Pete" Lacaba read one of his two poems in the collection, "Dreams that Awaken All but the Dreamer," about his grandmother who had nightmares that bothered him as a child. "Now I'm the one who has nightmares," he admitted.

Book editor and writer Babeth Lolarga wrote a poem for the book, too, this one about "ghosts freed from my grandmother's closet." She read: "I lived for those visits to Baguio/the privilege of bunking close to you/being awakened in the

'APARADOR'/ D2

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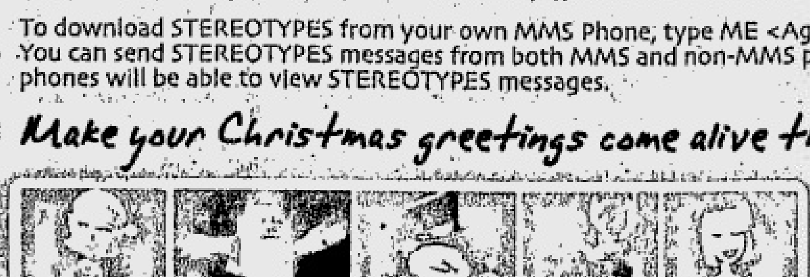
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After the movie, comes the Chavit book

REVIEW

"The 9 Lives of Luis 'Chavit' Singson"
97 pages
Foresight Books

By Leah C. Salterio
Contributor

AS if his P80-million biopic, which made a killing at the tills recently, is not enough, a biography of former Ilocos Sur governor Luis "Chavit" Singson has now been released, authored by Linda C. Limpe.

In the 97-page "The 9 Lives of Luis 'Chavit' Singson," the former governor again tells his life story. Perhaps to make up for the film's omissions because of its limited cinematic scope, the book seeks to answer everything people want to know or haven't heard about Chavit.

It chronicles the former businessman's entry into politics, becoming a political kingpin in his province for 28 years, and later playing a significant role in Philippine politics and democracy.

Limpe, in her author's note, said it was always difficult to write an accurate biography "because one has to talk to a lot of people to get a complete picture of a person's character and personality." But she said she was lucky "because many people generously extended their help and cooperation to me..."

She said she conducted hours of interviews with her subject and made several trips to Vigan, where she talked to people close to the former governor—family members, childhood friends, colleagues and business associates.

Inspiring the youth

Singson does not want the book to be just another biography. In the foreword, he says, "...it is my hope that my experiences... will serve to inspire others, especially the youth, as I have always strived, in my own humble way, to fight for truth and justice. My life has been a long and difficult road, but I was never known to take the easy way out. The fight is not yet over."

SINGSON in his ancestral home

Published by Foresight Books, the book's first few chapters give a historical background of Ilocos Sur, starting from pre-Spanish times.

The Singsons started to put down roots in Vigan in the 17th century. Joaquin Ayco, a merchant from Oasay, China, married a Chinese *mestiza*, Rosa Songnio, a Vigan native. Singson's forefathers ruled Vigan as far back as the 1800s. The post of *gobernadorcillo* was held by Don Leon Singson in 1846, Don Estanislao Singson in 1852, Don Domingo Singson in 1854, Don Tomas Singson in 1858 and Don Jose Singson in 1877.

A family tradition

By the 20th century, almost the whole Singson family was into politics. The governor's father was mayor of Vigan from 1968 to 1971, a post his elder brother Evaristo, better known as "Titong," held from 1972 to 1986. Titong also became governor of Ilocos Sur, albeit only briefly. He took office on June 1, 1988, and died on Dec. 25 that same year.

Ricardo Cepeda played the role of Titong in the film starring Cesar Montano. In the scene where Singson was shown crying following his brother's death, the former governor was played by his real son, Christopher.

Chavit, born on June 21, 1941, is the second among the seven children of Jose Singson and Caridad Crisologo. His other siblings, aside from Titong, are Bernardo (deceased), Fernando (Dodoy), Maria Livia (Honeygirl), Jerry, Germelina (Germy) and Bonito.

Singson married Evelyn Crisologo on May 3, 1962. Now separated, the couple had seven children.

Singson's biography seeks to fill information gaps in the P80-million film

The book traces Singson's growing-up years in Vigan, where he spent a normal childhood "with a very liberal upbringing and a lot of opportunity to play and make friends." He apparently got his own fondness for mahjong from his mother who loved the game.

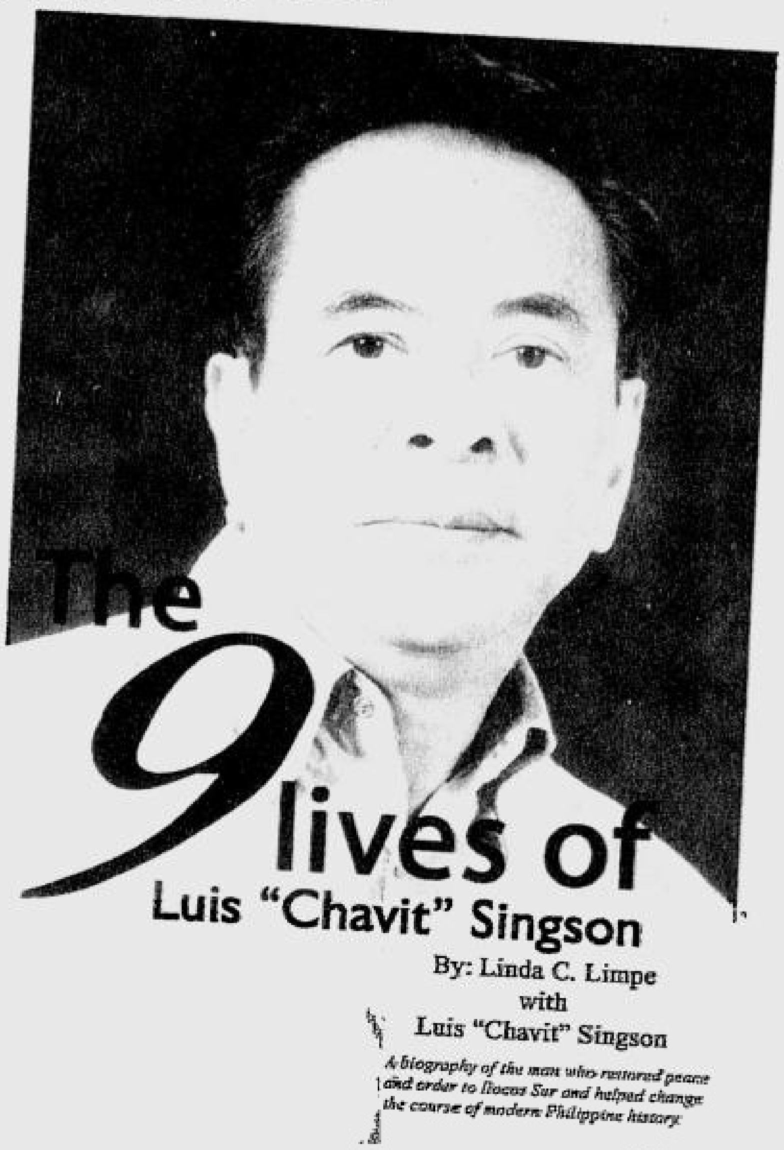
Despite their prominence in the province, it was not always a life of wealth for the Singsons. At one point, the family had to sell their appliances. Singson learned how difficult life was without money. That taught him to be street-smart.

Reading through the book's 15 chapters, one could see how Chavit's character was strengthened especially with the seemingly unending family squabbles and political dynasties of his youth.

The book also discusses the tobacco industry in Ilocos and how the Singsons got into tobacco growing and trading. The family brought the first redrying plant to Ilocos in the '60s.

Family feud

Then, of course, there's politics, Ilocos Sur-style, with the warring clans of the Singsons and Crisologos, backed up by the dreaded *saka-saka* troops, composed of unemployed farmers, fishermen and mercenaries.


The 9 lives of
Luis "Chavit" Singson
By: Linda C. Limpe
with
Luis "Chavit" Singson
A biography of the man who restored peace and order to Ilocos Sur and helped change the course of modern Philippine history.

People probably know that the bitterest political enemies in Ilocos Sur are also relatives. Chavit's mother was the younger sister of Rep. Floro Crisologo. Crisologo was married to Carmeling, who became the first woman governor of the province. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo, eldest son of Floro and Carmeling and Singson's first cousin, was, at one time, his worst enemy.

The book recounts the many violent and near-death encounters between the cousins, including the sensational arson and carnage in Barangay Ora Centro in May 1970 that put Bingbong behind bars.

Limpe also wrote about Singson as governor, his accomplishments, and even his women. The lengthy Chapter 14 gives what is supposed to be the real reason behind the Erap-Chavit feud, which led to the *juetengate* scandal and Estrada's ouster.

Never-before published photographs of Singson in his *baluarte* in Vigan, with the Bolkiah nook, a guest room built for the Sultan of Brunei; Chavit's mini-submarine and his 17-year-old pet python are included in the book.

"The 9 Lives of Luis 'Chavit' Singson" is available at National Book Store.

New children's book

MILFLORES Publishing Inc. has released "Tonyo's Wishes," a story for children aged eight and up, written by Lara Saguisag and profusely illustrated by Jeff Galindez and Janet de Veyra.

"Tonyo's Wishes" is a funny, delightful story about family relationships and good values that features Filipino legendary creatures: a *kapre, tiyanak, tikbalang* and *manananggal*.

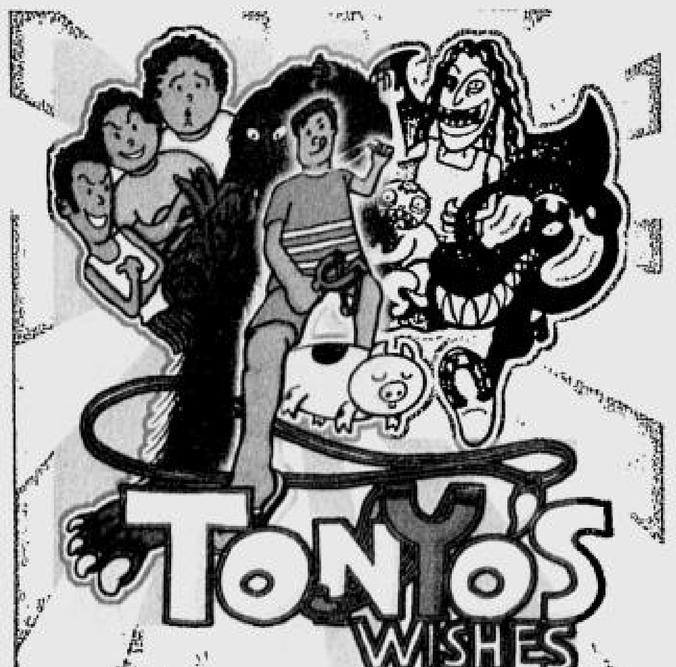
The exciting narrative provides an enjoyable avenue for children to enter the world of reading in English, where they can simultaneously develop language skills and stretch their imagination to better understand their family lives and Filipino culture. The rich illustrations on every page are visually stimulating and will help children follow the story.

The book is the only widely available Filipino story in English, at this time, for ages eight and up. Hitherto, Filipino children could only learn to read in English through imported books that are culturally confusing and alienating for young minds because they convey purely Western cultural settings, lifestyles and values. With "Tonyo's Wishes" and, hopefully, more books like it, Filipino children will no longer have to pay the price of cultural confusion and alienation in order to learn English.

Lara Saguisag teaches creative writing at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She has a B.A. in English Studies, major in Creative Writing, from UP and is currently completing an M.A. in Children's Literature at Hollins University in the US.

She wrote the best-selling "There's a Duwende in My Brother's Soup!" and is a member of Kuwentista ng mga Tsikiting (Kuting), an organization of Filipino writers for children. Illustrators Jeff Galindez and Janet de Veyra are the founders of Sandra Ink.

"Tonyo's Wishes" is available at National, PowerBooks and other leading bookstores nationwide.



Getting to know your National Artists

The
NATIONAL ARTISTS
of the Philippines
1999-2003

ANVIL Publishing and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, have launched "National Artists, Volume 2," a book covering some of the greatest names in arts and culture since 1999.

The book features the profiles of National Artists Virgilio S. Almario (Literature 2003), Ang Kiukok (Visual Arts 2001), Ishmael Bernal (Film 2001), Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana (Theater Arts 1999), Jose T. Joya (Visual Arts 2003), F. Sionil Jose (Literature 2001), and others. Since 1972, the award has been given to 50 artists.

According to the introduction: "The National Artist Award is the highest national recognition given to Filipino artists who have made significant contributions to the development of Philippine arts and to the cultural heritage of the country. It aims to recognize Filipino artistic accomplishment at its highest level and to promote creative expression as significant to the development of a national cultural identity... May this book inspire Filipinos to express themselves creatively, aspire for human values that art embodies and always endeavor for excellence."

The new book is available in all National Book Store and PowerBooks branches.

Call Anvil Publishing at 7471622, 6375692.

NATIONAL Artist Andrea Veneracion with NCCA chair Evelyn Pantig (above); flutist Jong Cuenco (left) pays tribute to his father, the late Ernani Cuenco, National Artist for Music.

'Aparador'—a treasure trove of 'lola' stories

From page D1

middle of the night/seeing your shadowy presence." She left many eyes misty.

Essays by eight more authors complete the collection: book publisher Marily Ysip Orosa; journalists Bill Formoso, Elvira Mata, and Emmie G. Velarde of the INQUIRER, Des Ferriols of the Philippine Star, and Tess Cerojano of the Associated Press; book editor Abe Florendo; and maritime school administrator Mary Lou Lacson-Arcelo.

In their carefully crafted works, grandmothers come across as either funny or tragic, passive or demanding, submissive or rebellious, but always hardy, wise and, regarded in hindsight, iconic.

After the main program, guests at the launch exchanged *lola* stories as well. Which is the whole point of the book, according to Velarde, who edited the anthology: "To get people to take a second look at their grandparents, appreciate them more, talk about them, and better still, talk to them. We owe them so much, and it often takes so little to make them happy."

A SMILE for grannies. The writers: (standing from left) Jose F. Lacaba, Jeannie Javelosa, Anna Leah Sarabia, Monique Buensalido, Jose Javier Reyes, Floy Quintos; (seated) Myrna Almario-Adriano, Lolita Delgado-Fansler, Emmie G. Velarde, Babeth Lolarga and Tess Cerojano

JINNO Rufino by Denise Weldon

Much-awaited body calendar released

METRO magazine's December issue features the much-awaited Body Calendar, a photographic essay of the country's sexiest people.

Among those featured are Rissa Mananquil Samson, Tim Yap and Chinggay Andrada. The issue also includes a forecast of 2004 fashion and makeup, Lucy Torres wearing the best of Joe Salazar's gowns, and Gretchen Barretto.

Other beautiful people in the issue are actress and television host Aubrey Miles; chef Gino Gonzalez; the Philippines' representative to Manhunt International 2004, Ronald Brent Javier; international model Ton Lao; fashion photographer and athlete Victor Consunji; and TV personalities Juddha Paolo, Andrea del Rosario, Jinno Rufino and Victor Neri.

Commercial model Angel Jacob poses nude for the first time.

Photographers involved in the Body Calendar issue are Jun de Leon, Tom Epperson, Ronnie Salvacion, Raymund Isaac and Giampiero Gastaldi.

AT THE Lopez Museum. Tim Yap by Tom Epperson, with Henri Calayag.

Food mag features holiday recipes

FOOD Magazine, the 2003 Consumers' Choice awardee for best culinary magazine, releases its December lineup of the best holiday recipes.

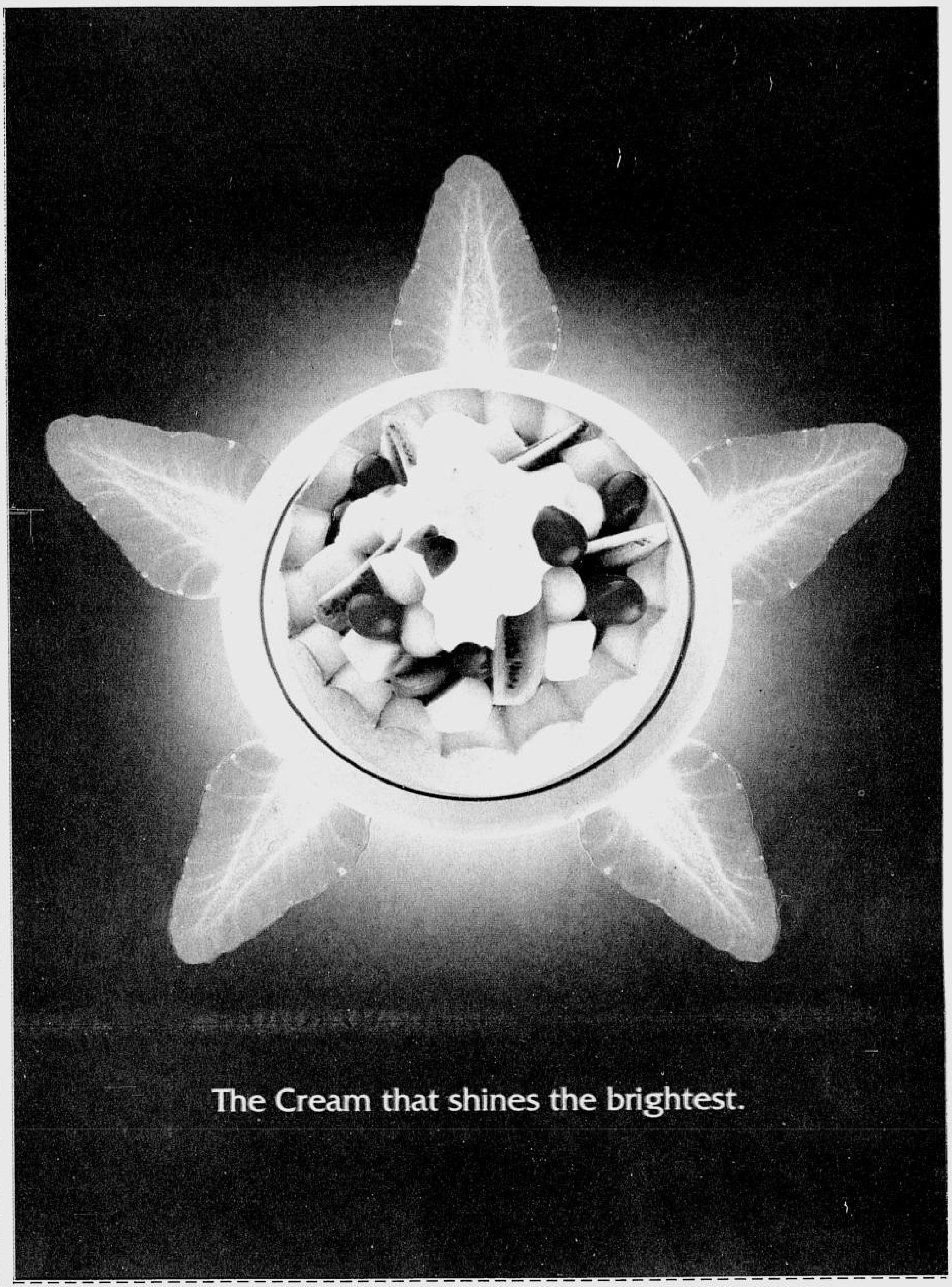
The issue carries innovative ways of serving Noche Buena favorites, roast chicken with four sauces and different kinds of pie. It provides a guide to cocktails and other party drinks.

The article, "Eat Drink and Be Merry, Minus the Holiday Pounds," is for food lovers who want to enjoy Christmas feasts without ruining their diet. It even includes a post-holiday eating plan that will help them cut back on calories.

The issue also carries Food's most popular sections, the two-week menu guide and columns by chef Dorothy Ferreria and nutritionist Sanirose Orbeta.

For those who wish to obtain back issues of Food magazine, ABS-CBN Publishing is offering a holiday promo that cuts prices to as low as P25.

Call 9244101 to 20 or 4152272 local 4655 to 4658.



Melon Cream Boat

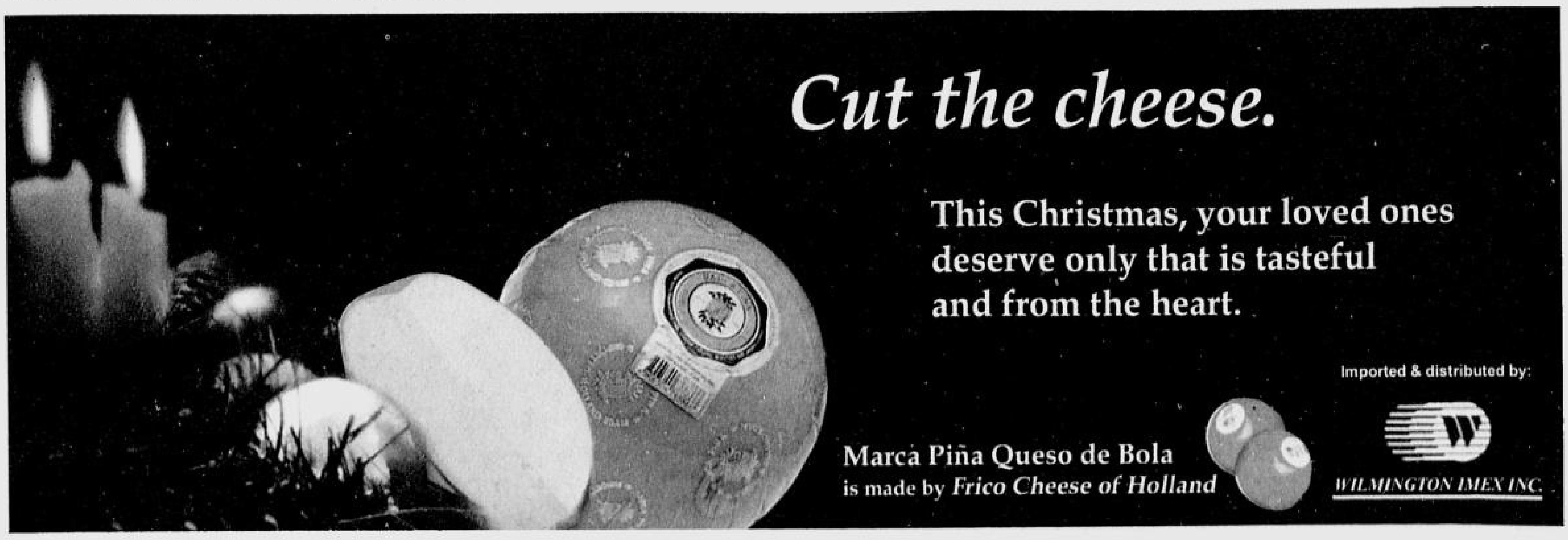
1 whole honeydew melon
2 med. ripe mangoes, sliced
3 pcs. kiwis, peeled and cut into wedges
1-1/4 cup (approx. 200g) seedless grapes
2 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
1 170g. can ***NESTLÉ Cream***
chilled juice of 1 orange
thin strips of orange zest, for garnish

Cut off about 2 inches of the stem end of the melon; discard the seeds and scoop out the flesh into small balls and place in a bowl. Add the mangoes, kiwis and grapes to the melon balls. Refrigerate.

Sift sugar on top and then sprinkle with orange juice. Spoon the mixture into the melon boat. Pour chilled **NESTLÉ Cream** on top. Garnish with orange zest. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

Note: Cantaloupe may be used in place of honeydew melon.

Nestlé
cream


Cut the cheese.
This Christmas, your loved ones deserve only that is tasteful and from the heart.
Imported & distributed by:
Marca Piña Queso de Bola
is made by Frico Cheese of Holland
WILMINGTON IMEX INC.

Century edge

Ambitious and literary, 'Siglo' takes local comic books to new storytelling heights

SIGLO
:FREEDOM
edited by
DEAN FRANCIS ALFAR
VIN SIMBULAN

"Siglo: Freedom"
Edited by Dean Francis Alfar
and Vin Simbulan
Mango Books, Quest Ventures
and Kestrel IMC, Inc.
2003, 140 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

REVIEW

ONE look at the elegantly spare cover, and readers will know that "Siglo: Freedom" is unlike anything else out there. Nothing indicates that it is a collection of comic-book stories. The loaded title, the beguiling design —everything about "Siglo" says this is a project that takes itself very seriously.

And readers should take it seriously as well, because "Siglo" is a brave, bold step forward for Philippine comic books.

The first in what is intended to be a yearly series of anthologies, "Siglo" is the brainchild of the people who crafted the prize-winning anthology "Isaw, Atbp." They have evolved that narrative effort into a more mature, more daring form. The project challenges popular ideas of what a comic book is and isn't.

Pushing the envelope is an impressive and diverse collection of comic book talent: Gerry Alanguilan, Dean Francis Alfar, Nikki Alfar, Arnold Arre, Jason Banico, Marco Dimaano, Andrew Drilon, Honoel Ibardolaza, Lan Medina, Elbert Or, Vin Simbulan and Carlo Vergara.

"There are no men in tights flying through our panels, or young geniuses firing lasers from their giant robots to fight off alien invasions," the editors write in their introduction. "But that does not mean we have a shortage of heroes. On the contrary, you will find tales of the courage and heroism of ordinary people as they struggle to attain their own unique brand of freedom."

Escapist it isn't

Obviously this is very serious stuff, so readers looking for escapist escapades should head elsewhere. It's so literary, it would easily be considered pretentious if it didn't work. But work it does.

Each set in a different time and place in Philippine history (and future), from Jolo in 1913 to Manila in 2004, the 10 tales in "Siglo" tackle a different vision of the quest for freedom, told through the writers' and artists' unique perspective. Staged in black-and-white and told mostly in English, each tale showcases the creators' diverse strengths and distinctive storytelling qualities.

Dean Alfar and Drilon's opening story juxtaposes the learning of a new alphabet with the painful lessons of a people's subjugation. Nikki Alfar and Dimaano's second story puts one woman's quiet liberation next to a man's loud call to arms.

Banico and Ibardolaza's take on a stage magician's fateful trip to Cebu is a parable in the tragedy of smoke and mirrors. Simbulan and Or's post-martial law story is a personal journey of living beyond a father's considerable shadow.

Delivering a punch

The stories are accessible and well-crafted, but the solo tales, written and illustrated by a single creator, deliver a particularly palpable punch.

The most lighthearted of the otherwise heavy stories, Dimaano's romantic tech tale, is sweet and heartfelt, much like his "Angel Ace" high jinks. Alanguilan's gritty take on a collaborator's change of heart, however, is as violent and as illuminating as his best work in "Wasted."

Arre's foreboding look at the future is a bracing, hypnotic visual departure from his usual work, though the message remains vintage Arre, classic and new in its own way.

Ibardolaza, also an award-winning writer of children's stories, displays a stunning range of visual style by conjuring a playful, wistful and perhaps heartbreaking portrait of young friendship amid the sugarcanes.

It is only right to pay special attention to the solo stories from two young but prime talents. Or's subtle unraveling of the scenes behind an arranged Chinatown marriage in the 1950s is a study in generational differences and in the efficiency of clean, solid storytelling.

Drilon's chaotic, noisy, dark roller-coaster ride through a wired, tangled techno-trapped metropolis provides a rousing, disturbing, fitting finishing kick to this ambitious anthology.

A thoughtful trip

The 10 stories stand apart and yet obviously follow one another, leading readers on a thoughtful trip through these disparate eras in Philippine past, present and future. And though the tales are patently works of fiction, something does ring authentic and convincingly true in the creators' aching portrayal of how freedom has been sought, sometimes attained, sometimes denied. It all feels so real.

Beyond just the collective talent in this collection, it is the singular vision of, the big picture being drawn by, "Siglo's" creators that pulls powerfully at the reader. Honest and edgy, it is that big idea whose time has come; the kind of comic book other comic-book people talk about all the time but never actually make.

It will be valuable to note that comic-book fans and non-comic book fans will be able to recognize good work when they see it, as the straightforward yet inventive storytelling in "Siglo" will appeal to serious readers. Don't expect any fluff. Don't expect fantasy.

There are times when readers can immediately identify that crucial step forward in a genre's evolution. Behold the footstep. A powerful collection of tales from a journey that is both fragmented and yet undeniably connected, "Siglo: Freedom" is a passionate paean to a people's seemingly endless search for the many things that have proven both invaluable and elusive.

Available at all Comic Quest branches.

Best Asian photos at the CCP

ON EXHIBIT at Pasilyo Carlos Francisco and Pasilyo Vicente Manansala of the Cultural Center of the Philippines until Jan. 17 is a photo exhibit titled, "The Joy of Sport," featuring 100 prize-winning photos in the annual photography competitions organized by Asia/Pacific Cultural Center for Unesco (Accu).

Part of the Japan-Asean Exchange Year, the show is organized by Accu in cooperation with Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Department of Tourism and Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily except Monday. Admission is free. Call 8321125.

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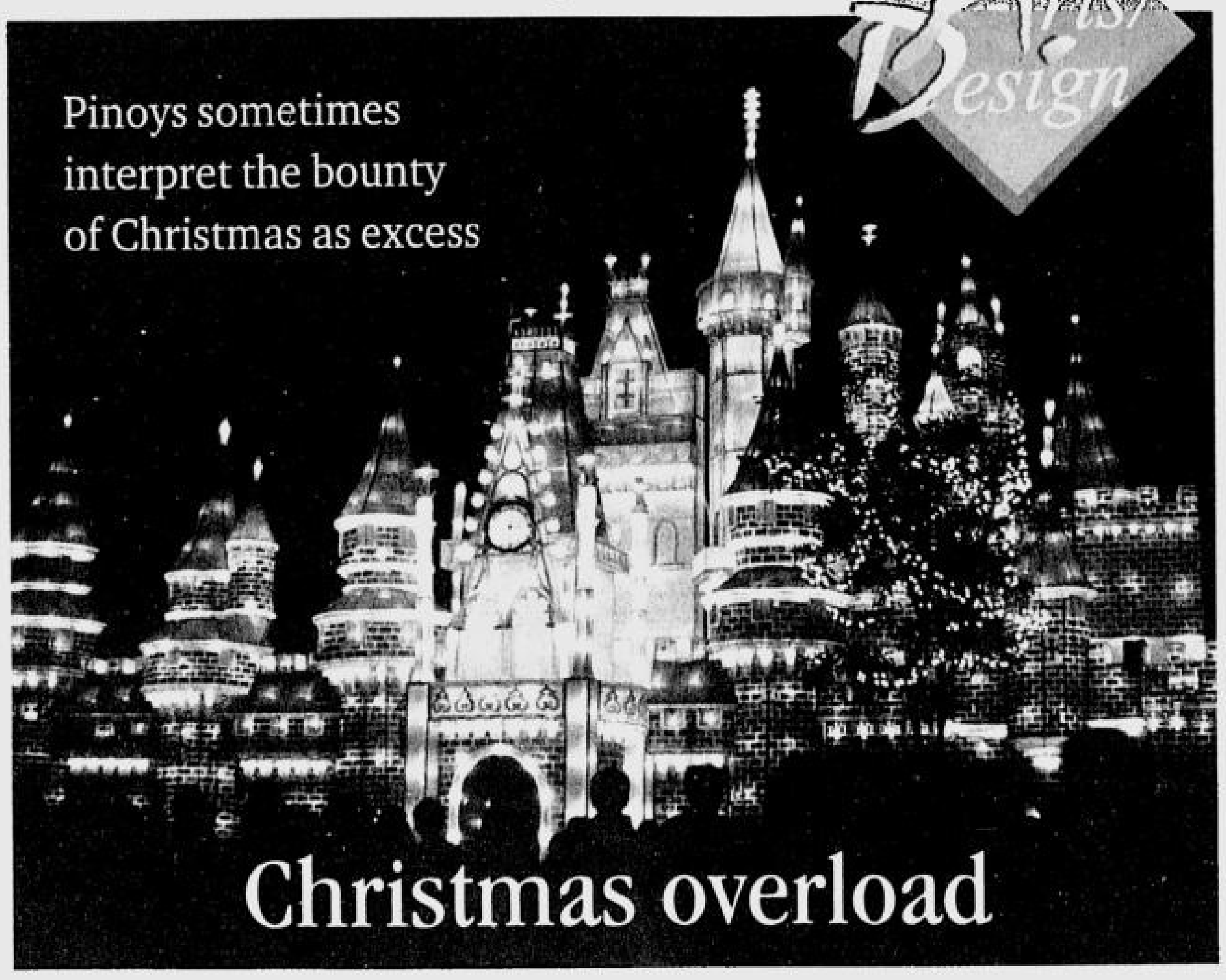
LIFESTYLE
Arts/Design



Pinoys sometimes interpret the bounty of Christmas as excess

Christmas overload

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto F. Villalon

EVEN before the December chill comes, the Philippines has already shifted into holiday mode. Every Pinoy seems to have winded down the year behind him and joined the rest of the country in the revelry of a long nationwide fiesta.

The Christmas holiday is a time for reliving traditions and rituals that have not changed for generations. Parols come out of storage and are hung in windows, arching rainbows of color over streets. As soon as the sun goes down, tiny lights sparkle all over where people live, whether in cities or barrios. Everything glitters.

Rituals come alive once again. One of them is the *misa de gallo*, a dawn Mass that runs for nine days culminating on Christmas eve when families feast and exchange gifts at midnight.

Families continue their own traditions in their celebrations. The same Christmas delicacies that have become part of the family cuisine for several generations are again served. Ham, ensaymada and queso de bola make their yearly appearances.

The years may come and go, but most of the rituals and milestones that go into Christmas celebrations remain basically unchanged. That, after all, is tradition.

There is comfort in tradition. The constancy in our manner of celebrating Christmas and in repeating rituals that take us, young and old alike, back to our own childhood is reassuring.

Christmas is one of those touchstones that take us back to our roots. Roots are the bases of cultural identity.

Christmas is the time of the year, though, when the Pinoy can indulge in the excess that he enjoys so much.

Take a look at decorations. Homes transform into different versions of Christmas wonderlands, each glittering with tinsel and "snow" in the best "White Christmas" tradition.

In all homes, something of Christmas covers every square centimeter of floor, walls and even the ceiling, if that were possible.

This is the time of the year when the dictum "more is more" is really what it is all about.

People gift each other with so much food that days before Christmas there is no longer any space left in the refrigerator to store the goodies.

Tables and sideboards groan with so much that it is impossible for families and friends to consume, but it is not a traditional Christmas without excess.

'More is not enough'

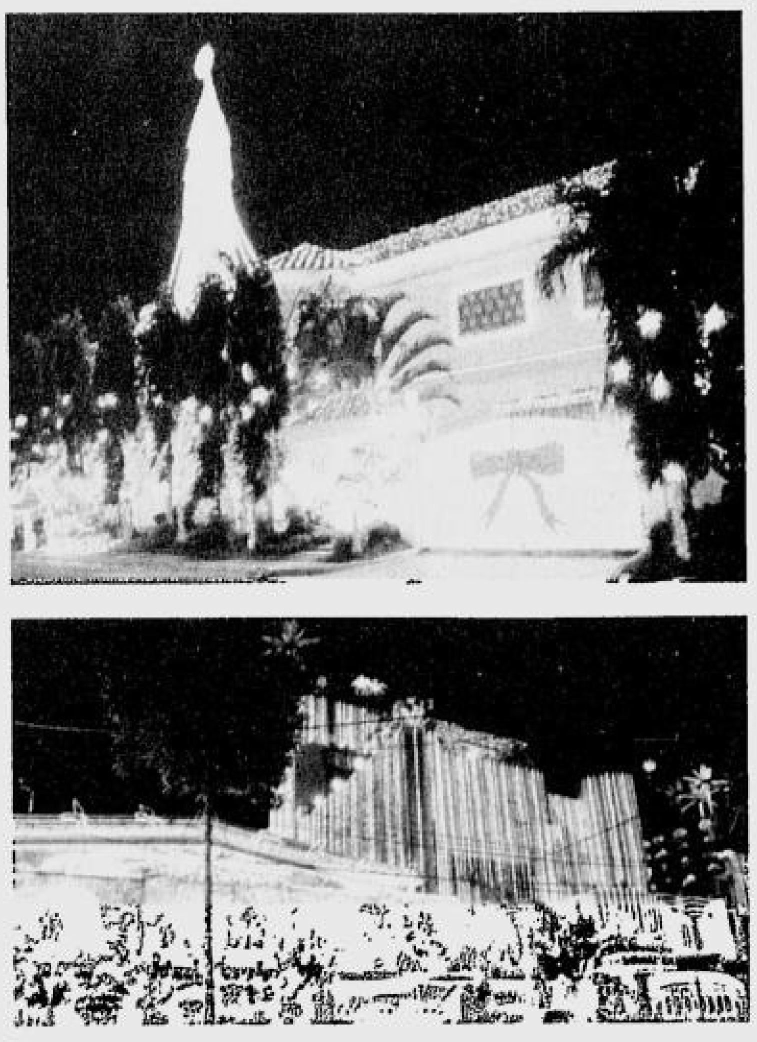
Actually, the dictum expands to "more is not enough." Christmas is a time of bounty. A pile of gifts circles the trunk of the family Christmas tree. Abundance must be seen and felt everywhere.

Maybe the underlying rationale could be demonstrating abundance to explain what a scholar once said that the Pinoy suffers from "horror vacui," or a fear of the empty.

We like filling everything up, like embroidering almost the entire surface of the *piña* we sew into *barong tagalogs* and *ternos*.

Remember the jeepneys of old,

CHRISTMAS/ E4



IN FILIPINO Christmas, more is not enough, as these blazing residence and building show.

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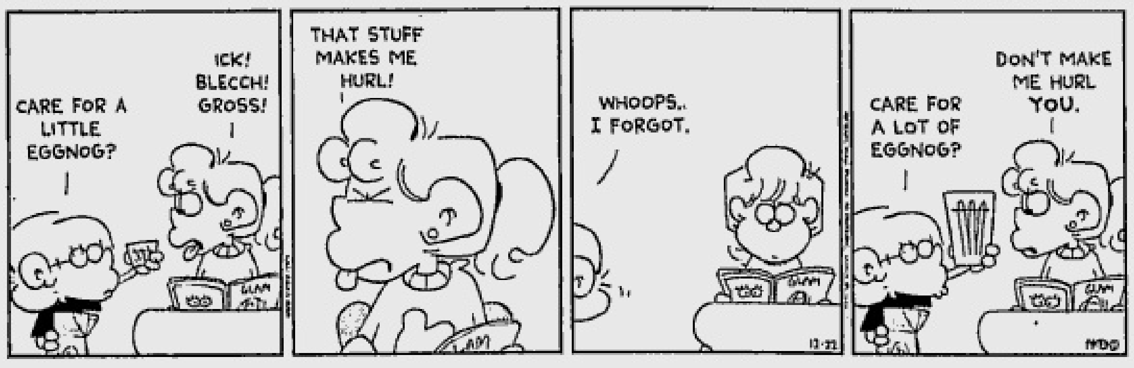
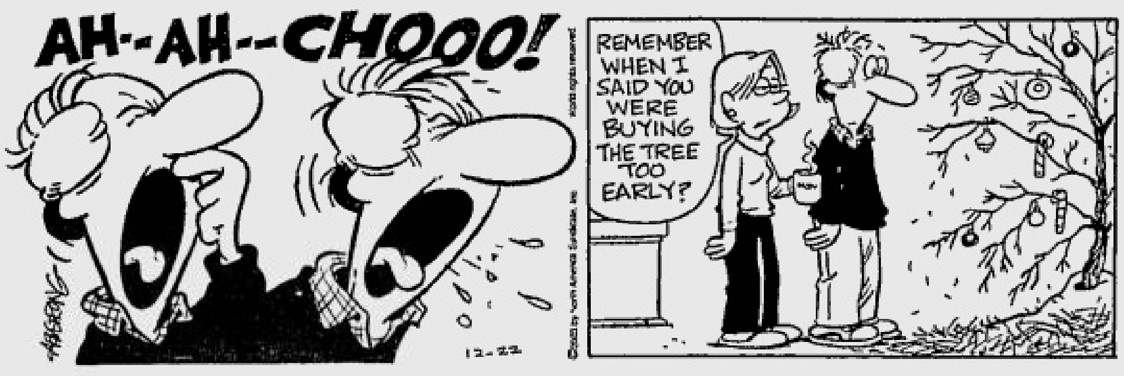
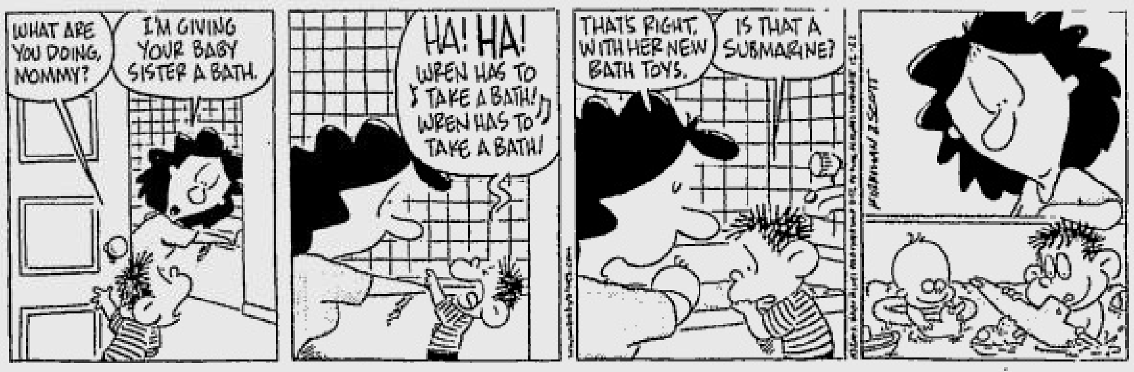
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


CARE FOR A LITTLE EGGNOG?
ICK! BLECCH! GROSS!
THAT STUFF MAKES ME HURL!
WHOOPS.. I FORGOT.
CARE FOR A LOT OF EGGNOG?
DON'T MAKE ME HURL YOU.

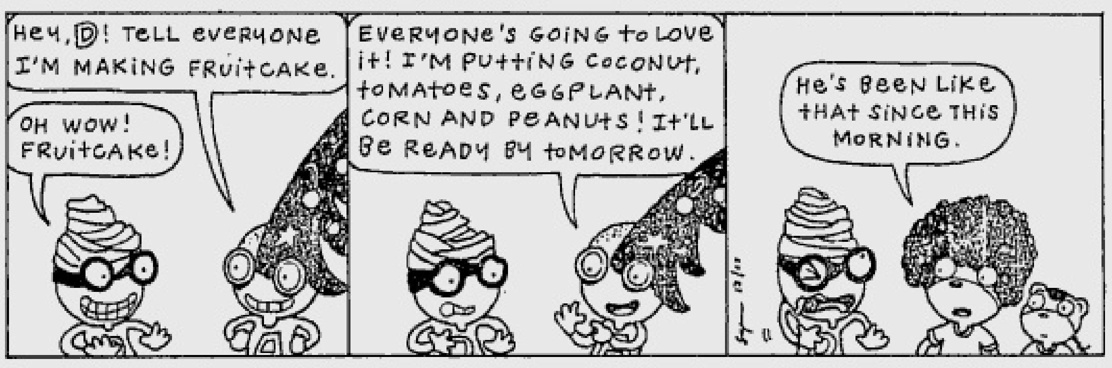
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


AH--AH--CHOOO!
REMEMBER WHEN I SAID YOU WERE BUYING THE TREE TOO EARLY?

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MOMMY?
I'M GIVING YOUR BABY SISTER A BATH.
HA! HA! WREN HAS TO TAKE A BATH! WREN HAS TO TAKE A BATH!
THAT'S RIGHT. WITH HER NEW BATH TOYS.
IS THAT A SUBMARINE?

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, D! Tell everyone I'm making fruitcake.
Oh wow! Fruitcake!
Everyone's going to love it! I'm putting coconut, tomatoes, eggplant, corn and peanuts! It'll be ready by tomorrow.
He's been like that since this morning.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You like to do your homework before you begin anything. Your penchant for preparation makes you a professional. Security matters to you; you think carefully before taking a risk. You need a lot of solitude to mentally sort things out. You have a forgiving nature. Work hard in the year ahead for rewards in 2005.
Birthdate of: Diane Sawyer, TV journalist; Lynne Thigpen, actress; Ralph Fiennes, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Look for opportunities to improve your job today. Lucky Jupiter is trying to help you do this for the next 10 months. (This blessing only comes once in 12 years.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Definitely plan to take a vacation now or in the next few months. Your desire to get away and have fun is growing! (You know who you are.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your domestic scene and real estate situation will benefit you now. Since the universe is trying to help you this way, do what you can to cooperate!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your mindset affects your day and the people you bump into. Start this week off with a positive frame of mind. Put a smile on your face before you speak to anyone.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your earnings and your assets will increase this year. Think what you can do this week to make this happen. Moneybags Jupiter blesses you now until next September!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Lucky Jupiter is in your sign for the next 10 months. Appreciate your good fortune. Don't be afraid to reach out for what you want.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Romance, love affairs, entertaining diversions and everything having to do with the arts can flourish now. Let yourself be open to the more frivolous aspects of life. (You need this.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Get ready for a busy week! This is also an excellent time to start a new course or research any kind of study. Expect to deal with siblings and relatives more than usual, too.

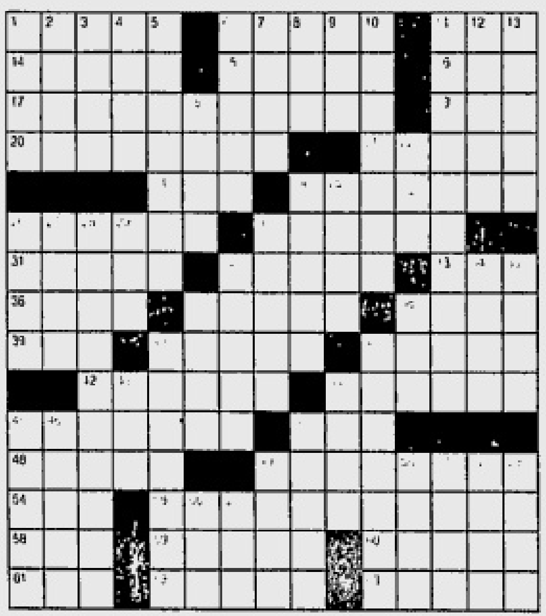
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Jupiter is high in your chart; the Sun is focused on money; Venus promotes all transactions; and Mars focuses on romance and fun. This week you can do anything and have a good time!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might improve your earnings this week. You're also shopping for beautiful things. Whatever you do, you're in the driver's seat, because the Sun is in your sign.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): With Venus in your sign now, relations with partners and close friends are smooth. This is a good time to patch up difficulties.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be more aggressive at work today. Decide to put your cards on the table. Tell people what you want and expect.

DAILY CROSSWORD


By Gerald R. Ferguson
Portland, OR
12/22/03

ACROSS
1 Che's cohort
6 Fix a cue stick
11 LL Cool J's genre
14 Conscious
15 Muse of verse
16 Lyricist Gershwin
17 Also known as Anthony Perkins
19 Tenth of MXX
20 Leave unnoticed
21 Occupied
23 Diligent insect
24 Complain in a surly manner
26 Trinidad's partner
30 More than one
31 Use a soapbox
32 Alan Ladd film
33 Four-legged toter
36 Slight
37 Starring roles
38 Low-cal
39 Half a candy?
40 Sound judgment
41 Make fresh
42 Landed manor
44 At sixes and _
45 Florida racing venue
47 Tyke
48 Surmise
49 Sweet, dark syrup
54 Sailors' admin.
55 Also known as Julie Andrews
58 __ Leppard
59 Water pitchers
60 Dine at home
61 Devonshire river
62 Return in kind
63 Writer Terkel

DOWN
1 Groupies
2 Victor's cry
3 Take on
4 Columnist Bombeck
5 Loss through the cracks
6 Attempt to disprove
7 Part of QED
8 Make lace
9 Inhabitant of
10 Carriage
11 Also known as Humphrey Bogart
12 Disney's Little Mermaid
13 "Common Sense" writer
18 Childhood taboo
22 Drs.' org.
24 Clearing
25 Flees
26 Burial chamber
27 Dunkable treat
28 Also known as Don Knotts
29 Had a pizza
30 Aspect
32 "The Flying Dutchman" girl
34 Anna of "Nana"
35 Bastes and hems
37 Slant
38 Exod. follower
40 Gung-ho attacker
41 Records again
43 Sault __ Marie
44 Han or Napoleon
45 Electron tube
46 Building wing
47 __-turvy
49 Pianist Hess
50 Brief quarrel
51 In __ (in position)
52 Writer Bagnold
53 9-digit IDs
56 Profound dread
57 Agt.

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	M	A	L	G	A	M	■	A	S	P	I	R	E	S
L	A	N	T	A	N	A	■	S	C	O	L	A	R	I
G	L	I	D	I	N	G	■	L	O	L	L	I	N	G
E	L	M	■	T	A	N	B	A	R	K	■	M	E	N
B	E	A	N	■	L	E	A	N	N	■	L	E	S	S
R	U	L	E	■	I	S	N	T	■	P	I	N	T	O
A	S	S	A	S	S	I	N	■	H	E	S	T	O	N
■	■	■	D	E	T	A	I	N	E	E	S	■	■	■
A	C	T	O	R	S	■	S	E	A	P	O	W	E	R
S	H	A	P	E	■	S	T	U	D	■	M	O	N	O
S	E	P	T	■	S	U	E	R	S	■	E	R	G	O
U	R	I	■	C	A	R	R	O	T	S	■	D	A	M
R	I	O	T	I	N	G	■	S	O	I	L	A	G	E
E	S	C	A	P	E	E	■	I	N	T	E	G	E	R
S	H	A	R	E	R	S	■	S	E	E	K	E	R	S

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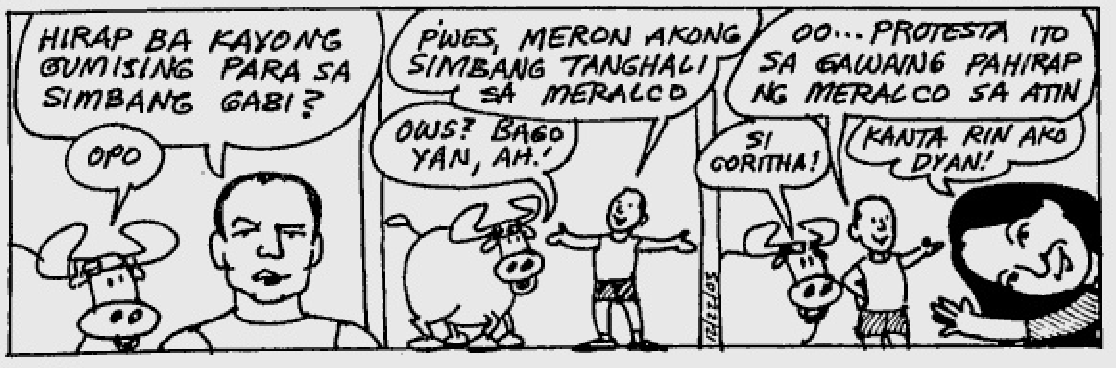
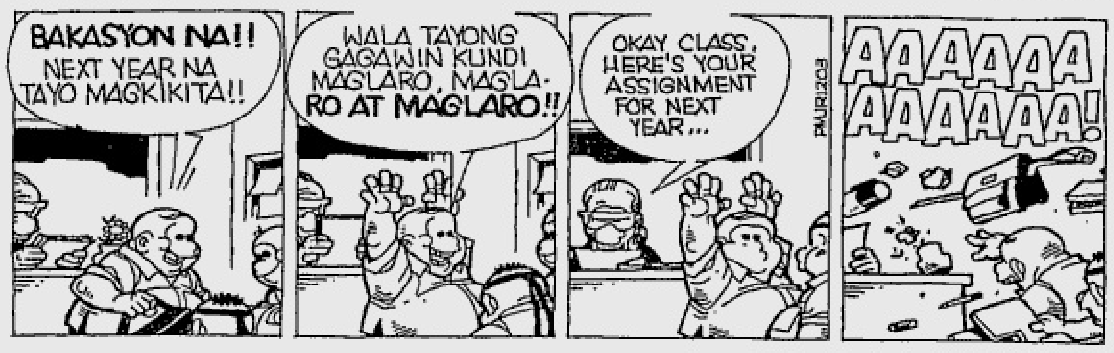
12/22/03

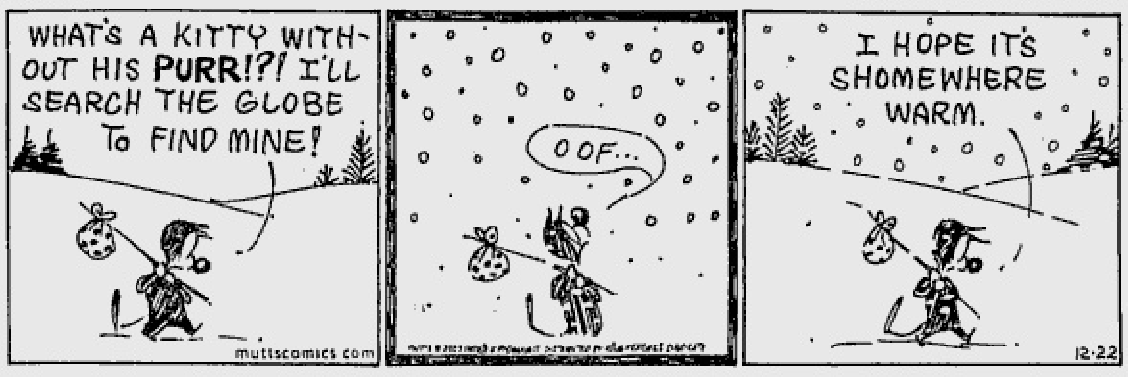
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HIRAP BA KAYONG GUMISING PARA SA SIMBANG GABI?
OPO
PWES, MERON AKONG SIMBANG TANGHALI SA MERALCO
OWS? BAGO YAN, AH!
OO... PROTESTA ITO SA GAWAING PAHIRAP NG MERALCO SA ATIN
SI GORITHA!
KANTA RIN AKO DYAN!

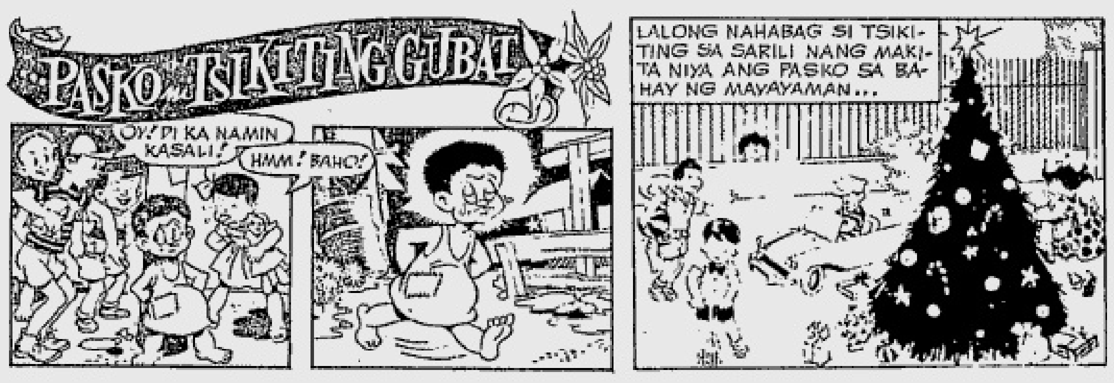
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKASYON NA!! NEXT YEAR NA TAYO MAGKIKITA!!
WALA TAYONG GAGAWIN KUNDI MAGLARO, MAGLARO AT MAGLARO!!
OKAY CLASS, HERE'S YOUR ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT YEAR...
AAAAAA AAAAAA!

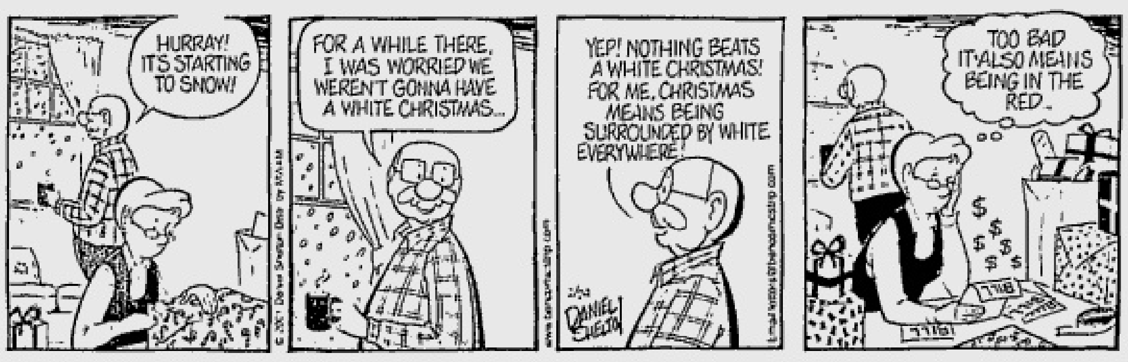
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S A KITTY WITHOUT HIS PURR!?! I'LL SEARCH THE GLOBE TO FIND MINE!
OOF...
I HOPE IT'S SHOMEWHERE WARM.
muttscomics.com

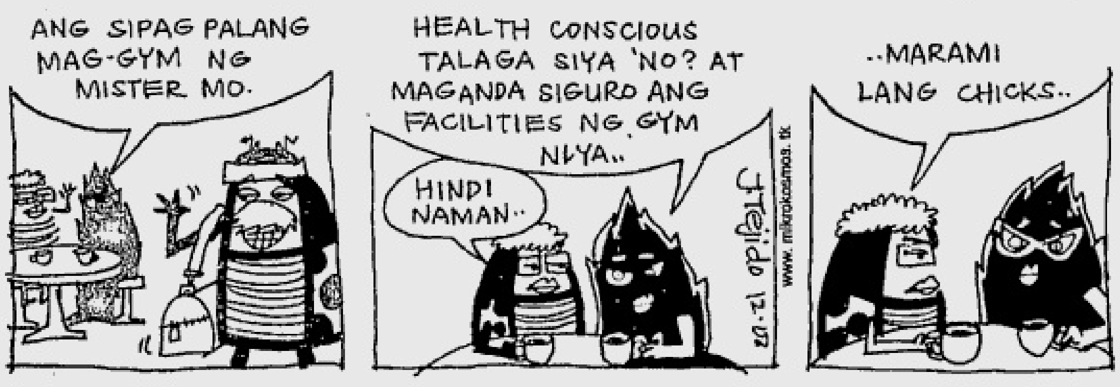
KENKOY KLASIKS BY TONY VELASQUEZ


PASKO NI TSIKITING GUBAT
OY! 'DI KA NAMIN KASALI!
HMM! BAHO!
LALONG NAHABAG SI TSIKITING SA SARILI NANG MAKITA NIYA ANG PASKO SA BAHAY NG MAYAYAMAN...

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


HURRAY! IT'S STARTING TO SNOW!
FOR A WHILE THERE, I WAS WORRIED WE WEREN'T GONNA HAVE A WHITE CHRISTMAS...
YEP! NOTHING BEATS A WHITE CHRISTMAS! FOR ME, CHRISTMAS MEANS BEING SURROUNDED BY WHITE EVERYWHERE!
TOO BAD IT ALSO MEANS BEING IN THE RED.

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG SIPAG PALANG MAG-GYM NG MISTER MO.
HEALTH CONSCIOUS TALAGA SIYA 'NO? AT MAGANDA SIGURO ANG FACILITIES NG GYM NIYA..
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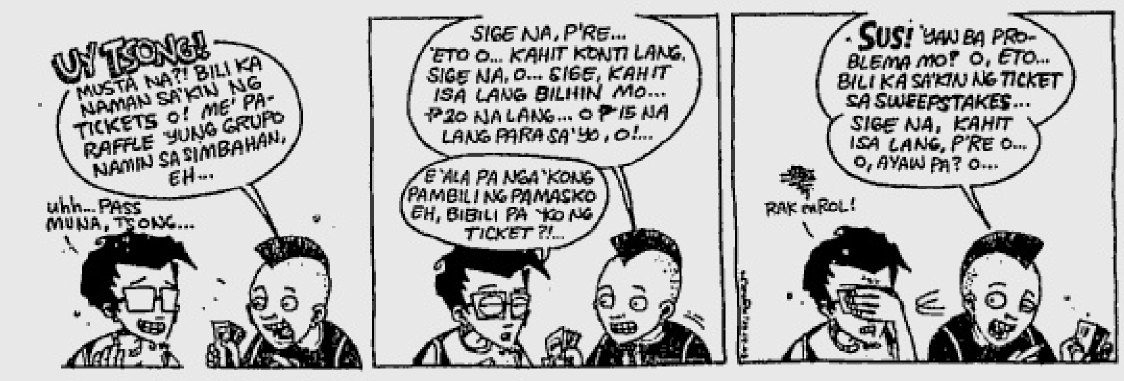
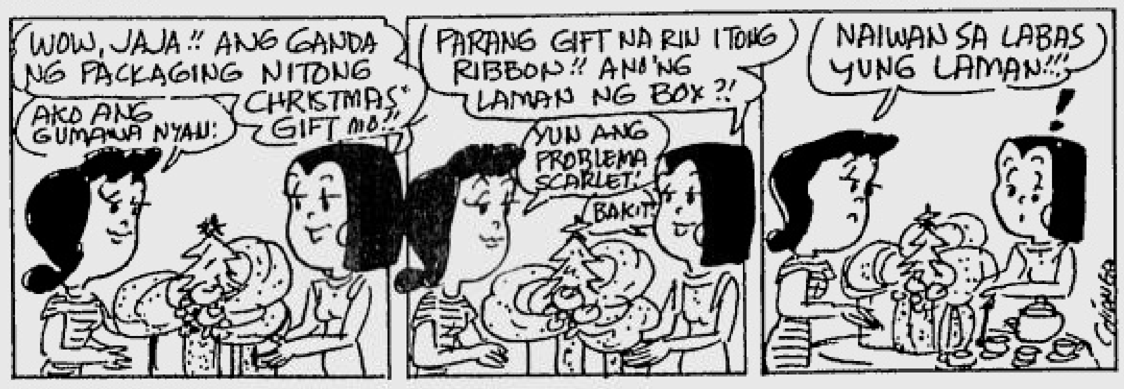
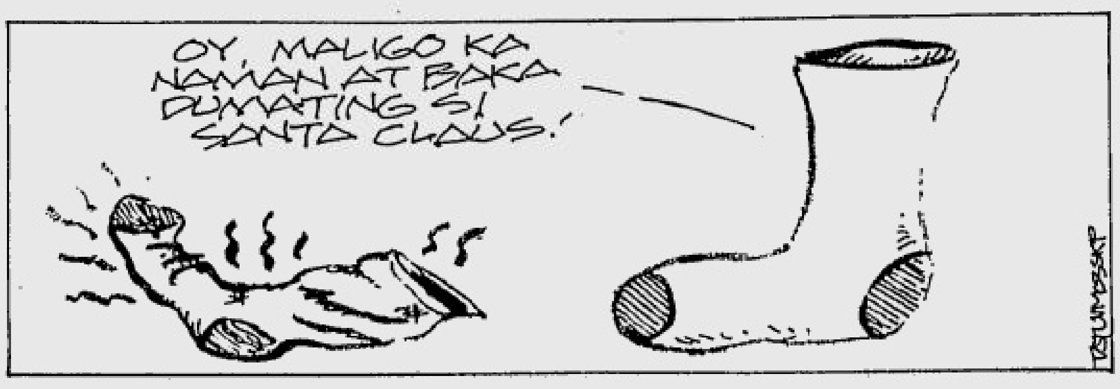
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

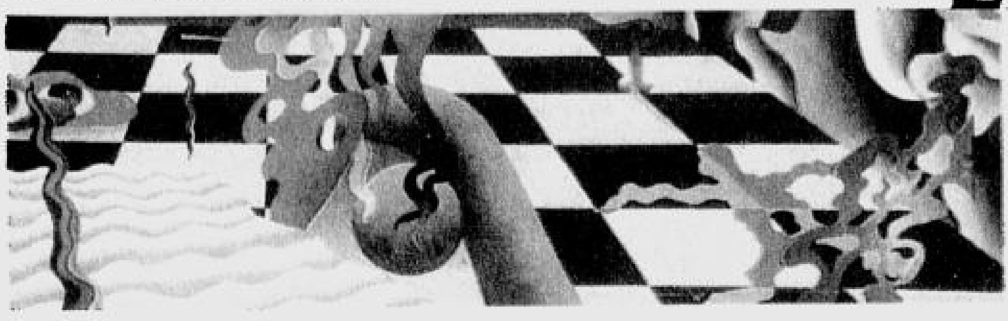

UY TSONG! MUSTA NA?! BILI KA NAMAN SA'KIN NG TICKETS O! ME' PA-RAFFLE 'YUNG GRUPO NAMIN SA SIMBAHAN, EH...
uhh... PASS MUNA, TSONG...
SIGE NA, P'RE... 'ETO O... KAHIT KONTI LANG. SIGE NA, O... SIGE, KAHIT ISA LANG BILHIN MO... ₱20 NA LANG... O ₱15 NA LANG PARA SA'YO, O!...
E 'ALA PA NGA 'KONG PAMBILI NG PAMASKO EH, BIBILI PA 'KO NG TICKET?!...
SUS! 'YAN BA PROBLEMA MO? O, ETO... BILI KA SA'KIN NG TICKET SA SWEEPSTAKES... SIGE NA, KAHIT ISA LANG, P'RE O... O, AYAW PA? O...
RAK ENROL!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WOW, JAJA!! ANG GANDA NG PACKAGING NITONG CHRISTMAS GIFT MO!!
AKO ANG GUMAWA NYAN!
PARANG GIFT NA RIN ITONG RIBBON!! ANO'NG LAMAN NG BOX?!
YUN ANG PROBLEMA SCARLET!
BAKIT
NAIWAN SA LABAS YUNG LAMAN!!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


OY, MALIGO KA NAMAN AT BAKA DUMATING SI SANTA CLAUS!



"[SUR]REALITY," Danny Castillones Sillada's show of oil paintings, pen and ink drawings, photographs and visual poetry, opened recently at the Philippine Art Gallery (22 Oakville St., White Plains, Quezon City) and runs until Jan. 10, 2004. Sillada's paintings and drawings are mystical in spirit and fantastic in conception. Although autobiographical, his art and poetry are deeply rooted in his socio-cultural environment, particularly his beginnings in Mindanao. The show also features his chapbook of poems, "If I Could Write the Saddest Poem and Other Selected Poems." Sillada finished Philosophy and Sacred Theology at the University of Santo Tomas Ecclesiastical Faculties. Call 995-7185.

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Divisoria
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Lucena
Marikina
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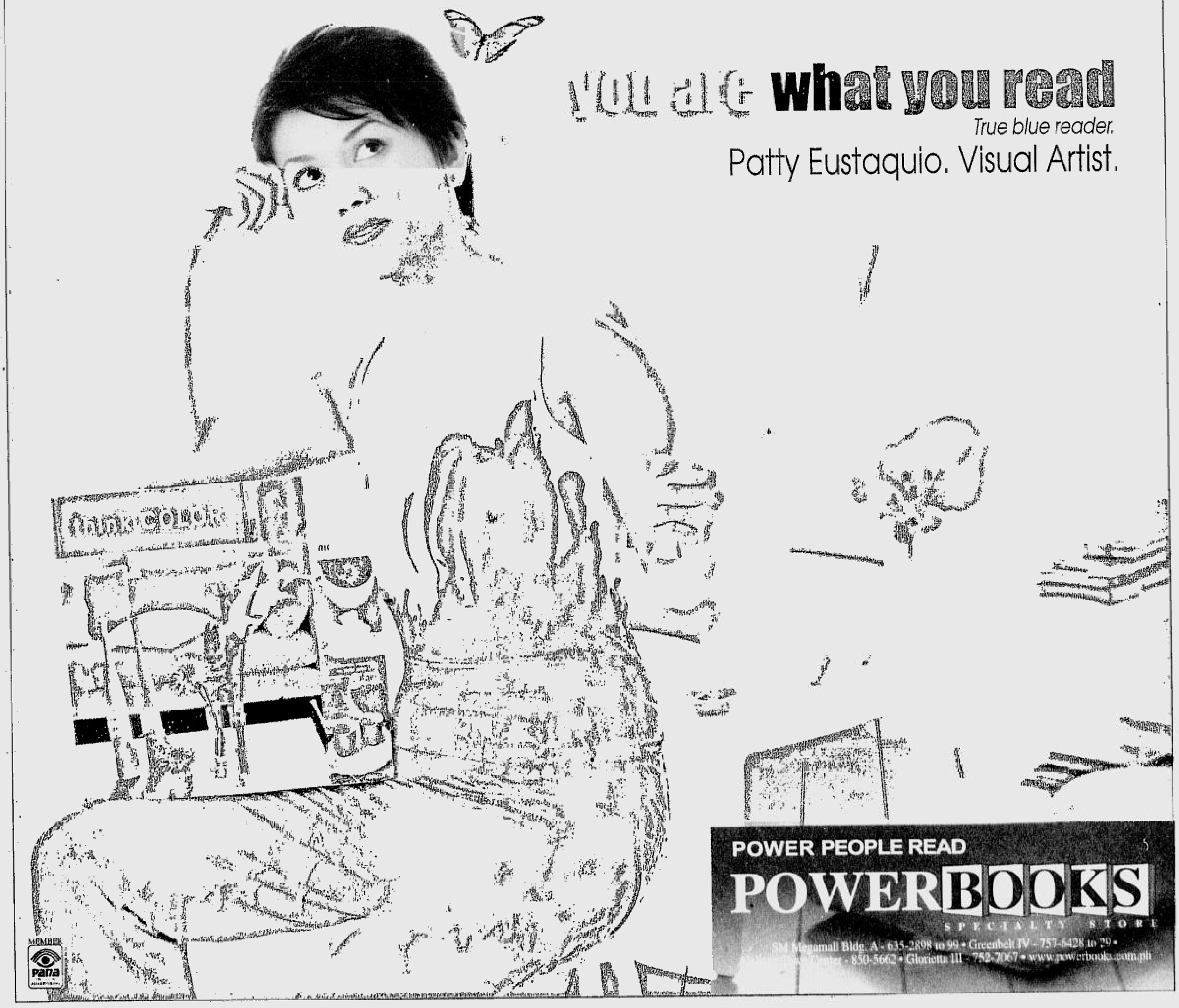
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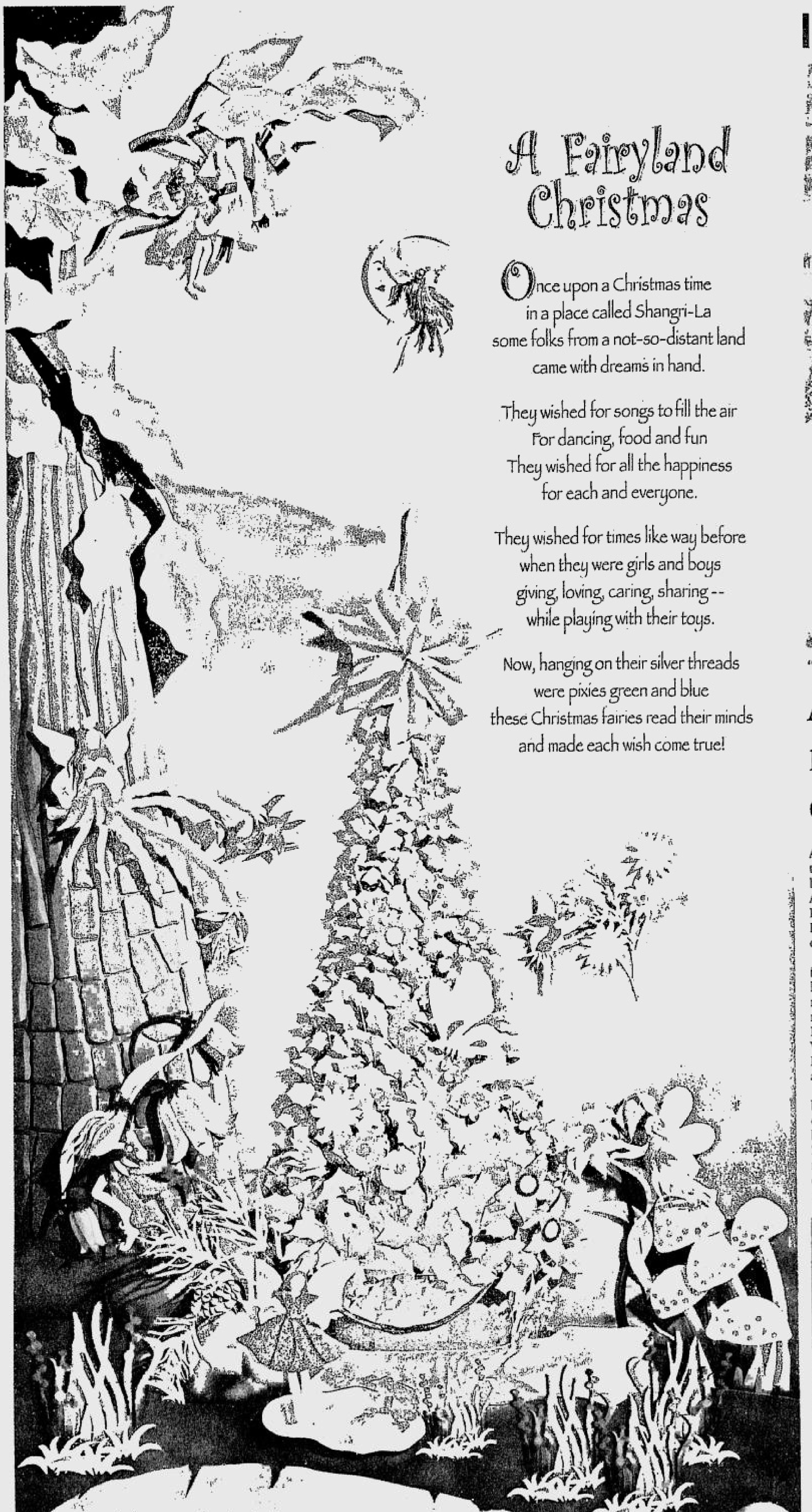

A Fairyland Christmas

Once upon a Christmas time
in a place called Shangri-La
some folks from a not-so-distant land
came with dreams in hand.

They wished for songs to fill the air
For dancing, food and fun
They wished for all the happiness
for each and everyone.

They wished for times like way before
when they were girls and boys
giving, loving, caring, sharing --
while playing with their toys.

Now, hanging on their silver threads
were pixies green and blue
these Christmas fairies read their minds
and made each wish come true!

Celebrate the holidays in so many ways

❄ Children's Christmas Carols

Sacred Heart Academy Pasig
[illegible] 23 • 4:30pm
St. Paul College Pasig
[illegible] • [illegible]:30pm
Chiang Kai Shek & the Dynamic Youth Chorale
[illegible] 2003 • 2:00pm

❄ Breakfast with Santa at Color Me Mine
[illegible] 2003 • 10:0[illegible] 12:00nn

❄ Harpist Ms. Holly Paraiso
[illegible] • 2:00pm - 4:00pm

❄ Meet Santa Claus at Santa's Nook
[illegible] • 2:00pm - 5:00pm

❄ "Alagang" Healthway with Doctor Santa
[illegible] Healthway [illegible]

Storytelling Session
[illegible] • 3:00pm
Face Painting
[illegible], 2003 • 3:00pm

❄ Simbang Gabi
[illegible]
-23, 2003 • 4:00pm

❄ Pre-New Year Celebration with Dimsum & Silk
Streetscape • December 30, 2003 • 9:00pm

❄ Christmas Musical Performances
Grand Atrium, Level 2

Christmas Winter Fairyland
A Christmas Musical Performance of
Kids Acts Philippines
December 14 & 27, 2003 • 4:00pm

World-renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers
December 1[illegible], 2003 • [illegible]:30pm

A Christmas Offering
An Effie Nañas School of Classical Ballet
Christmas Presentation
December 20, 2003 • 4:30pm - 6:00pm

Enchanting Christmas Specials
Bituin Escalante with Acoustic Jive
December 20, 2003 • 7:00pm
Sarah Geronimo
December 23, 2003 • 6:00pm
Marissa Sanchez
December 28, 2003 • 6:00pm
Kyla
December 30, 2003 • 6:00pm
Ayen Munji & Emy Munji
January 2, 2004 • 6:00pm

The Shang Grand Christmas Show
with Pops Fernandez
December 21, 2003 • 7:00pm

Pasko sa Langit...
Handog ng Batang Mandaluyong
The Launching of the Mandaluyong Center
for Performing Arts • December 22, 2003 • 6:00pm

UP Singing Ambassadors
December 26, 2003 • 6:00pm

Goosical
Trumpets Christmas Musical Performance
December 17, 18, 19, 2003 • 7:00pm

❄ Streetscape Christmas Performances
featuring the country's top bands
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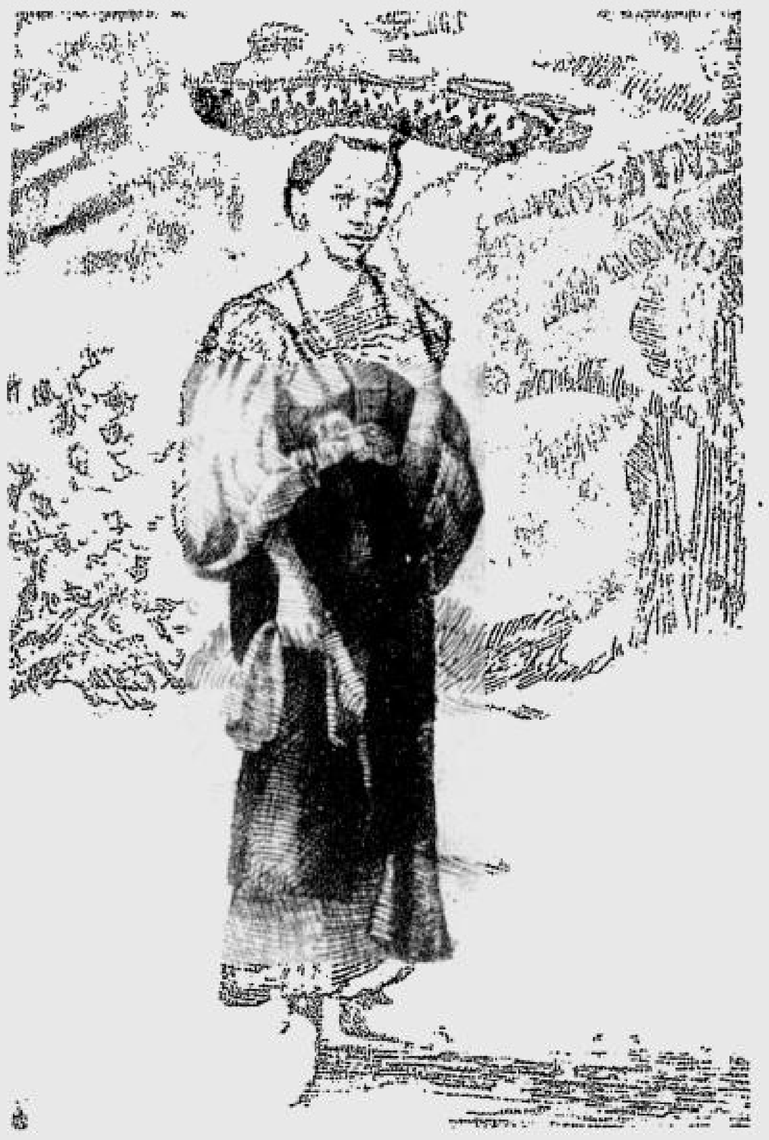
• December 24 - 10:00 am - 5:00pm • December 25 - CLOSED
• December 26 to 30 - 10:00am - 9:00pm • December 31 - 10:00am - 7:00pm
• January 1, 2004 - CLOSED



"WOMAN VENDOR," by Miguel Zaragoza

Artistree presents rarely seen works of Filipino masters

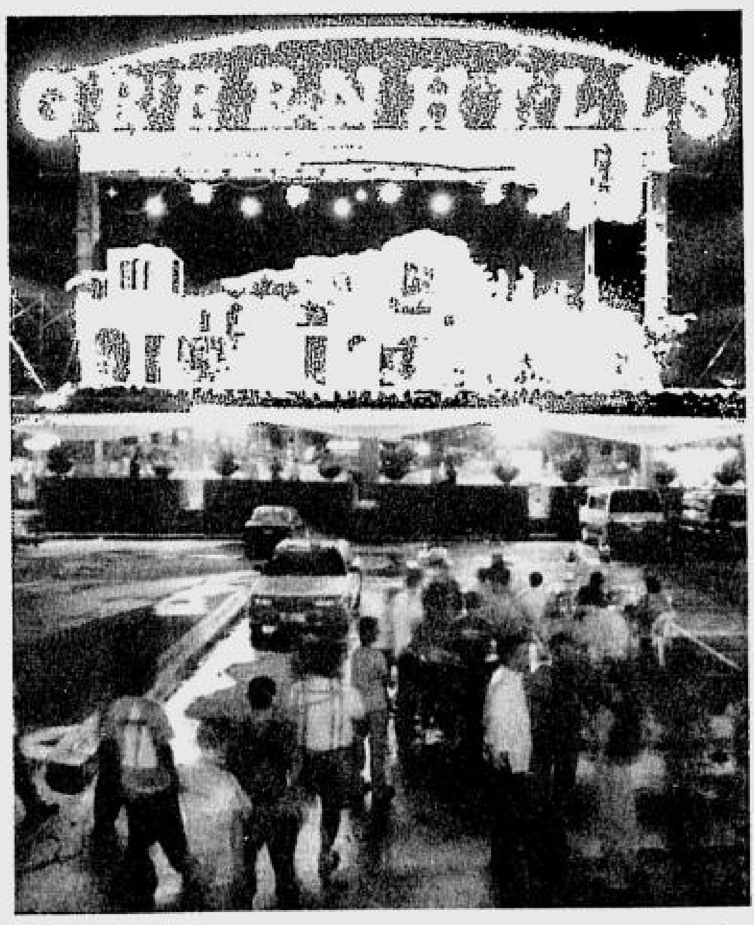
A RARE exhibit of Filipino masters will be mounted by Artistree beginning Dec. 26 until Jan. 14. Artistree is located at Unit 1, Art Plaza, Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Edsa corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong.

The show, "Legacy of Masters," focuses on the works done over the last century by such masters as Simon Flores, Miguel Zaragoza, Fernando Amorsolo, Fabian de la Rosa, Carlos "Botong" Francisco, Vicente Manansala, Victorio Edades, Rafael Enriquez, Jose Joya and Onib Olmedo.

Many of the pieces have long been in the possession of private collectors while some have never been publicly exhibited. Zaragoza's works show scenes from the countryside at the turn of the century. Another rare piece is Amorsolo's "The Maestro," circa 1918, using charcoal on paper. Botong Francisco's work consists of pencil studies for historical murals as well as genre scenes. Edades is represented with a 1928 work, "Alaskan Snow Scene," mixed media on paper. Joya, recently named National Artist, has five oils on canvas belonging to his "White" series done in the 1950s. Manansala has five works in the show, done between the 1950s and 1970s. The most recent pieces in the show belong to Olmedo, with some 10 works that date jack to the 1970s.

The show is a must-see for all serious collectors of Philippine art, particularly those interested in a comprehensive view of the artistic output by the country's finest artists over the last century.

Call Jane or Eric at tel. 6312080.



CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND? No, it's the Filipino version of "White Christmas."

Christmas overload

From page E1

so overdecorated that they were ultimately banned because of being menaces on the road?

Horror vacui is neither good nor bad. Nor is it a characteristic peculiar to the working class or the elite. It simply is a wonderful part of our multi-cultural makeup; one of the characteristics ingrained in the Filipino from centuries of mixed Asian, Spanish baroque and American influences. It is one of those factors that weave into the tapestry that sets the Filipino apart from his Asian neighbors, giving him an individual identity and flair that is different from his neighbors.

Our traditional Filipino Christmas is of abundance expressed through excess and abandon. Christmas is a total celebration, an orchestrated overload in sight, hearing, smell, taste and feel. Without the overload, it would not be Christmas for the Pinoy.

We need change if we are to move forward in this world. But change does not happen in a vacuum. To anchor that change, we also need to have things that remain constant, like Christmas.

For the Christmas season, I wish each one of you the comfort, warmth and happiness that maintaining tradition brings.

Email your comments and feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com

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LIFESTYLE

Amadeo Y. Manalad
HISTORY'S MURALIST
Amadís Ma. Guerrero
preface Juan T. Gatbonton
a critical appreciation Patrick D. Flores

Forgotten heritage

By Constantino C. Tejero

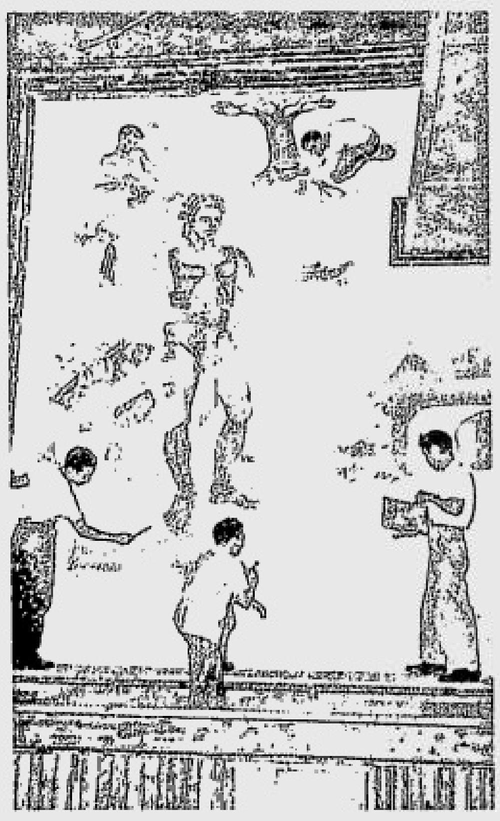
"Amadeo Y. Manalad: History's Muralist"
By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Kasaysayan Publishing, Manila, Philippines, 2003
119 pages

AN ALBUM-LIKE book gives a realistic reappraisal and perspective of the work of a Filipino artist that even astute art-lovers seem to have forgotten.

Recently launched was "Amadeo Y. Manalad: History's Muralist," by Amadís Ma. Guerrero. Consisting of 11 chapters with a preface by Juan T. Gatbonton, a critical appreciation by Patrick D. Flores, and photography by Raffy Guerrero, the book tries to redress, as Gatbonton says, "a historical anomaly: the utter neglect of the painter and muralist Amadeo Y. Manalad, a contemporary—and peer—of the National Artists Carlos V. Francisco and Vicente S. Manansala."

The book not only reappraises Manalad's artistic legacy but explores an entire life, retracing from documents and through interviews the artist's early childhood in Pangasinan, late youth in Manila, the budding of his art, the flux of quotidian life. The text is not composed of cold biographical notes, though, but is warmed by anecdotes about not only the artist and his colleagues but almost anyone linked to him, from his forebears to his descendants.

A respected art historian, critic, short-story writer, journalist, travel writer and INQUIRER contributor, Guerrero writes in spare, lucid prose that can hardly be improved.



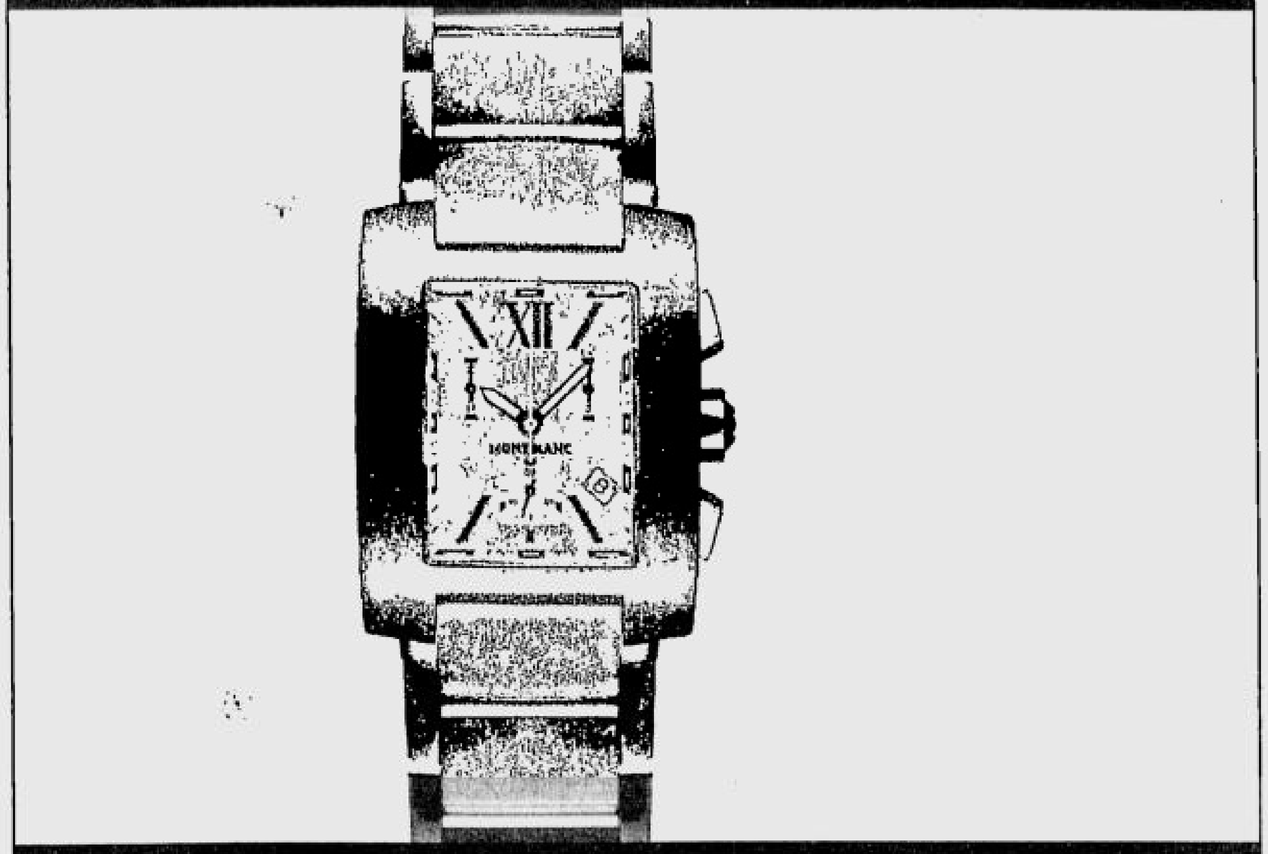
MANALAD works on the mural in Snack Bar No. 11, assisted by Marcelo Certeza (center) and Vicente Manansala (left).

At once he identifies the essence of Manalad's art by using as the book's epigraph a quotation from the artist: "What I look for in paintings are softness of the lines and a balanced flow of the composition."

Schooled in Escuela de Bellas Artes (later the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts) and though mentored by the Modernists, Manalad produced art that

FORGOTTEN/ F3

MONT BLANC



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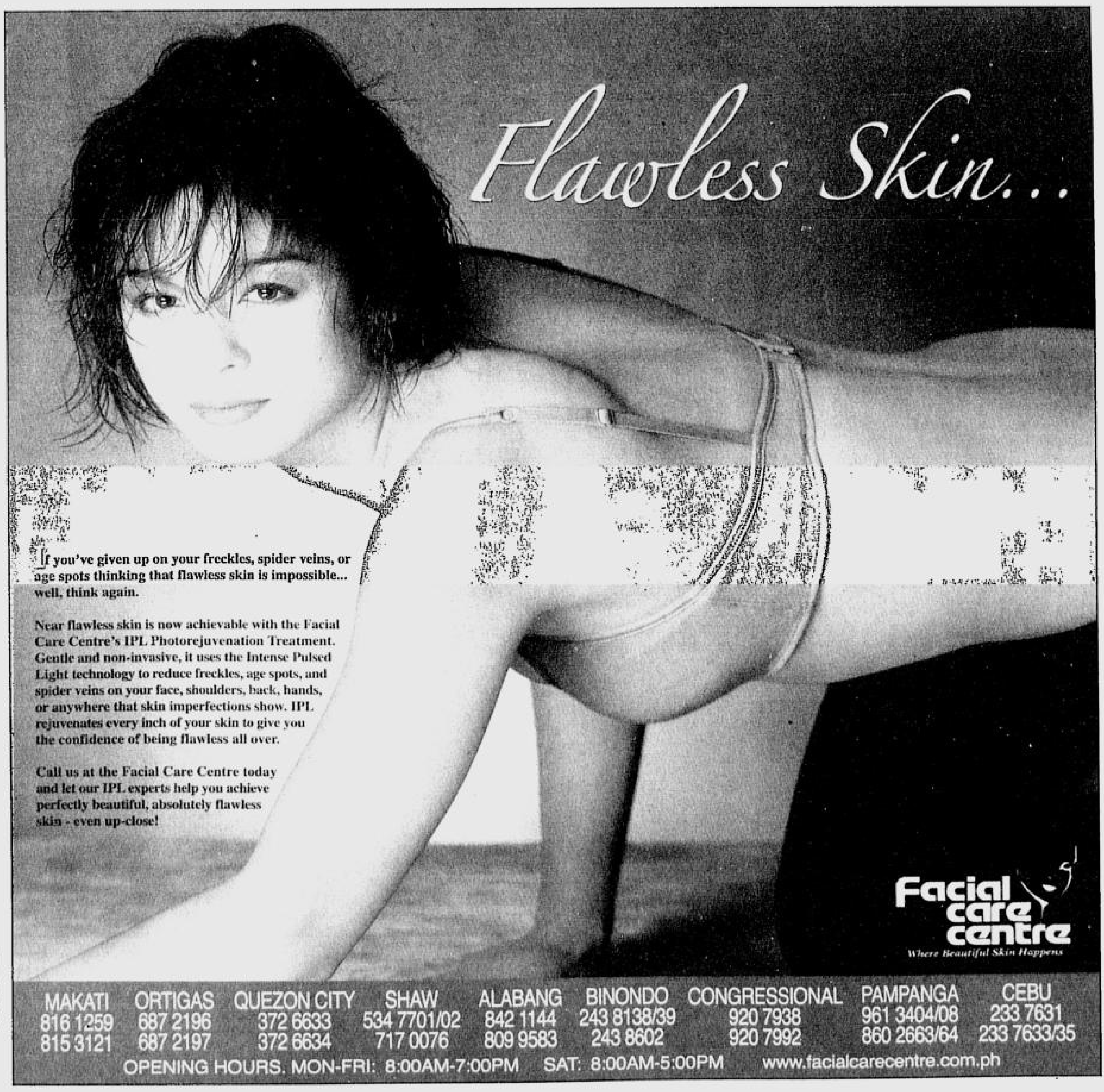
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New artists emerge into the light

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

CAN art be taught? Can someone uninitiated to art-making become the artist of his dreams with help from a mentor?

The answer, in the case of the 10 artists of The Nakpil Group mentored by Renato Habulan, is a resounding yes. Their inaugural show, "Crossing the Threshold" (SM Megamall Art Center, until Jan. 5), is proof that mentoring can steer the raw talent toward the discovery of its own artistic worth.

It helped that the mentor was himself an artist who had his own struggles with the muse. A perspicacious artist of the Social Realist school, Habulan has, in the last decade, played the role of mentor to aficionados who turned to art for self-expression, to indulge in the rare pleasures that the creative act brought.

From the Ayala Museum where he first taught, Habulan decided to become full-time mentor to people with little or virtually no formal training in painting.

Sometime in mid-2002, he organized a small group of students, a motley mix of professionals such as doctors, journalists, housewives. He also took under his wing a young struggling artist as a scholar.

Habulan helped his wards with essential exercises, exposing them to the rudiments of drawing and painting. With the help of artists like Fred Liongoren, Antipas Delotavo and Alfredo Esquillo, he further exposed them to the nitty-gritty of art-making.

The exhibit is bannered by Habulan's own work, a large oil painting, "Sinasamba," of a junkshop custodian beside an old machine, his passport to survival. Looming over it is the icon of Virgin Mary, paraded together with the Nazarene on the Quiapo feast day. It is perhaps the artist's own homage to the heroes of his age, the nondescript workers who have dominated his canvases.

The exhibit of Habulan's wards is truly a finely mounted and illumined show, thanks to Gallery Genesis that co-sponsored the show.

Allison David of Hong Kong, who married a Filipino bank executive, has four works with an identical subject: cloth loosely hanging from above onto a chair, its folds and creases creating a wave of textural effects. In boldly expressionist rendering, the material exposes a figure underneath the dramatic draping and folding, teasing both the eye and mind.

David responds best to large configurations, a rare, quasi-abstract sensibility that probes beneath the surface of objects and artifacts.

Also preoccupied with the subject of cloth, Alice Cuazon has still-life oil paintings in "Asian Silk Series," a melange of personal mementos from an Asian sojourn.

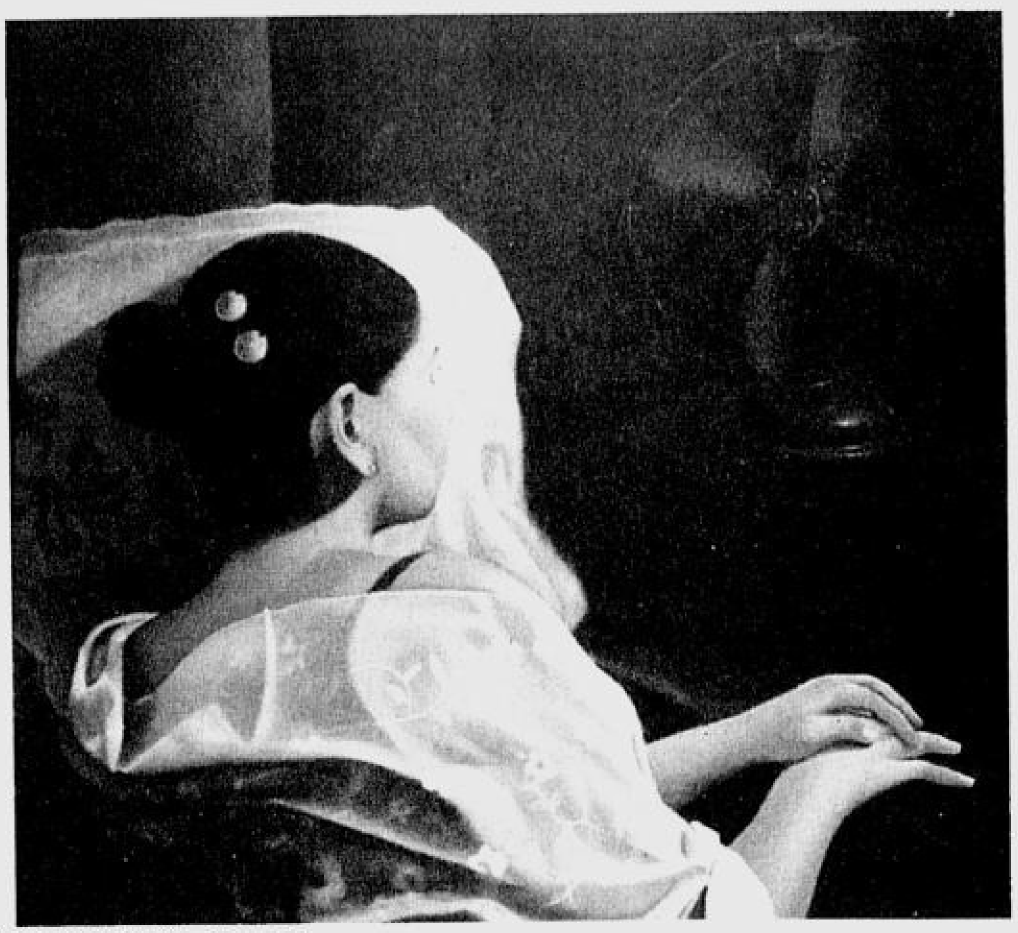
The sundry objects—an ivory tusk, blue and white ceramic pieces, old embroidery items, candles and baskets—are strongly Asian, rendered with such rare delicacy that is both spiritual and sensual, wordly and mystical.

A doctor by profession, Myrna Fojas plumbs the realm of memory with mementos from her past. "Courtship," in diptych format, and "Felisa and Apolonia" strike a nostalgic chord with objects like her parents' letters of courtship, the old *baro't saya* wrap hanging on *capiz* windows.

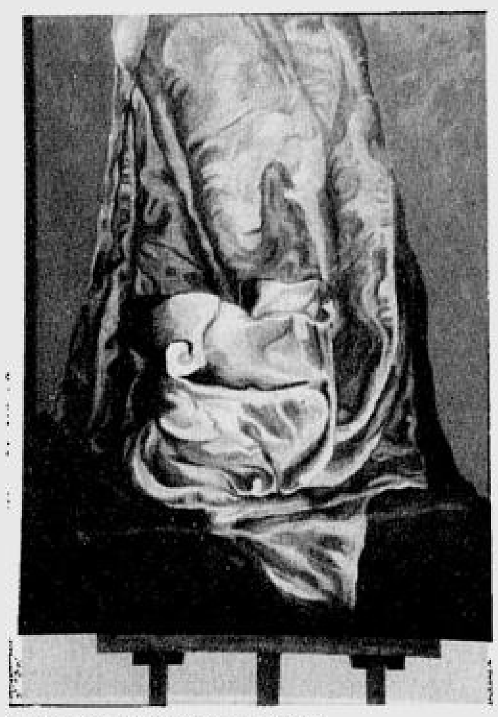
The work "Double Life," showing a doctor's lab gown hanging by the door with a painting, reveals the artist's dual concerns.

Highly spiritual is Helen Mirasol's "Kwan Yin Triptych," with three images of doors, the last opening to reveal a full view of the Chinese deity Kwan Yin surrounded by an energy field from the nerve center.

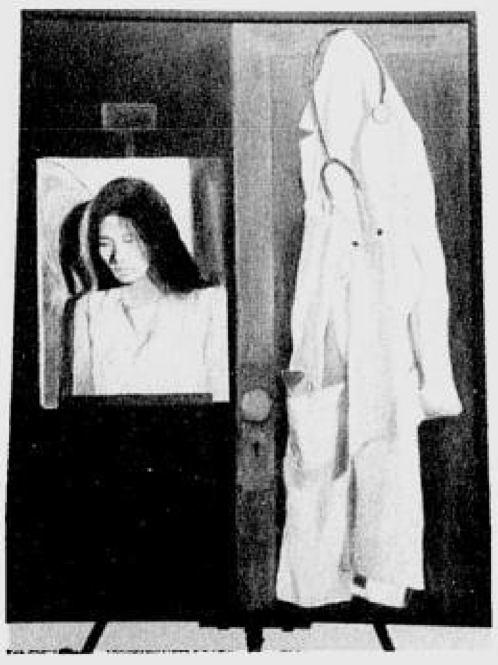
The American Buddhist married to a Filipino banker has another work, "Crossing Over," where she visualizes in a largely narrative mode the meaning of rebirth and the eventual passage into another realm. It is a powerfully visualized work from a deeply held belief on life and death and the Buddhist principle of resurrection.



"LA SIESTA," by Manuel Tuason



"CLOTH II," by Allison David



"DOUBLE Life" by Myrna Fojas

Molly Yap is represented by three still lifes, which, like David's and Cuazon's, explore the admixture of fabric designs of table cloth and fruits on the table top. She has a sharp eye for her subjects, rendering them in photorealist mode.

Pandy Singian's oil paintings, part of her "Comfort Zone" series, show images in various formats. A commercial arts graduate with no painting experience, Singian is obviously enamored with the role of narrative as she explores vignettes from personal memory.

Similarly, Lita Gelano shows her fondness for subjects with indigenous character in portraits of tribal maidens (Igorot, Tasaday and Maguindanao) that show off their colorful finery.

In another work, "Simbahan," Gelano chose the façade of an old church with three *retablos* of religious icons, the Virgin Mary ensconced in the center.

The three men in the show have more divergent tastes. Mel Cabriana, taken in by Habulan as a scholar, has three works exploring the more organic aspect of things.

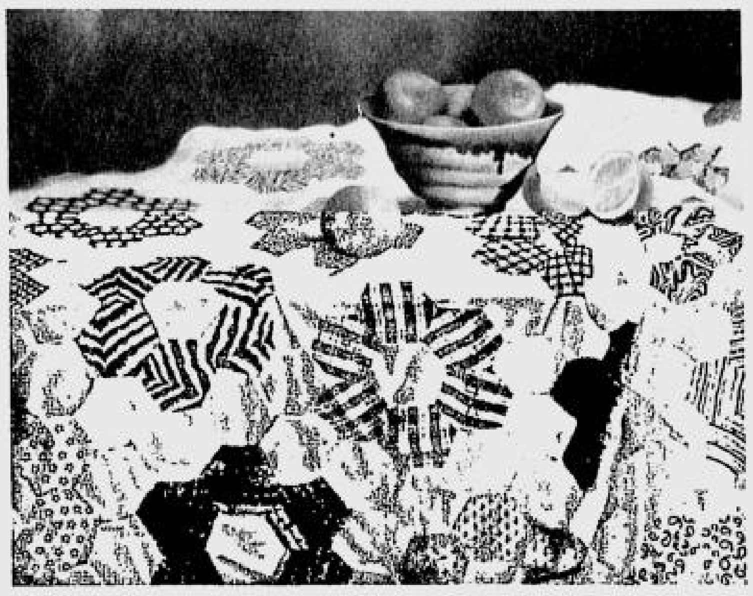
From a boy's coming of age in "Pana-panahon," incorporating a photograph amid a clutter of leaves and marbles, to a corn hanging by a *sawali* wall and a hen cooped up in a corner of a hut, Cabriana captures the textures of objects and the primal light filtering through a slat in a rustic abode.

Manuel Tuason, a radiologist, evokes a Latin temperament with works that carry a strain of our Hispanic character.

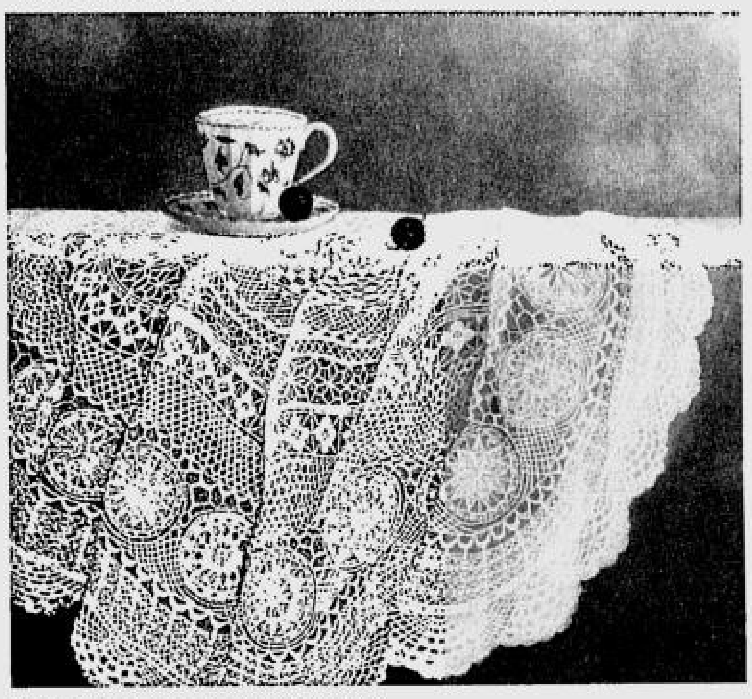
From his "Las Nimfas," with two nude women basking in the moonlight; his portraits of three women, "Las Reflecciones," posing in front of a mirror; to his triptych "Tres Lunas," again with three women with the moon for backdrop, Tuason uses reflection as motif, presumably inspired by the subject of reflected image that is at the core of his profession.

The exhibit's most pleasant surprise is the two works of Peter Sutcliffe, a British news correspondent whose job brought him to various parts of the world. Retired and settled in Manila, he ruminates on wanderlust in large-scale works of six and eight panels forming a rich tapestry of images.

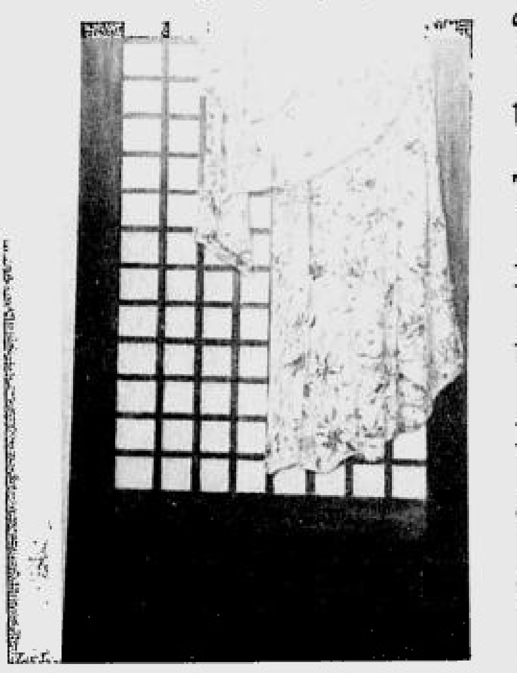
Mainly a watercolorist, Sutcliffe transferred the water-based qualities of aquarelle to oil to transmute vignettes with a light-hearted, seriocomic tone.



"DEBBIE'S Tangerines," by Molly Yap



"ALLISON'S Teacup," by Molly Yap



"FELISA and Apolonia," by Myrna Fojas

In "Alice in Birdland," the artist's peripatetic life is symbolized by emblems of flight and journey, from birds flying to primitive statues navigating on a boat. The other work, "Makati's Magic Mansion," has a postmodern iconoclastic bite, showing his fellow artists interacting with saints while surrounded by sundry religious artifacts, many in funny poses.

Sutcliffe's irreverent sense of composition and cacophony of images wonderfully cap the magical show of new artists.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

> 'Crossing the Threshold' is proof that mentoring can steer the raw talent toward the discovery of its own artistic worth

Social realists at Astra, Yuson's sculptural tables at Mag:net

ABSTRACT table and other furniture sculptures by Reg Yuson at Mag:net

VISUAL ARTS

ASTRA Gallery presents the group exhibit of social realist painters Ato Habulan, Egai Fernandez, Jeri Incgo, Neil Doloricon and Nune Alvarado. The show runs until Dec. 24 at the 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Makati.

MAG:NET Gallery features "Tables: Furniture Sculptures by Reg Yuson," until Jan. 10. The exhibit is Yuson's foray into aestheticizing the functional.

"Design, as opposed to art, is the urge to bring vision, innovation, surprise and invention to objects of function that we interact with daily," the sculptor explains.

Focusing on the table, he renders the object in the minimalist and abstract idioms he has been known for.

Mag:net Gallery is at The Loop, ELJ Center, 9501 Eugenio Lopez St., ABS-CBN Compound, Mother Ignacia Ave., QC.

SOCIAL/ F3

IRENE Marcos Araneta, Rosary Benitez, Gina de Venecia, Australian Ambassador Ruth Pearce, Makati Mayor Jojo Binay and Menchu Tantoco Lopez cut the ribbon of the Happy Group Art Exhibit in the Art Gallery of the Philippines. Artists who exhibited their paintings include Jenny Leviste, Carla Cruz and Beth Beriquet. Other Happy Group artists Frannie Jacinto, Evelyn Gamboa and Fely Lopez also exhibited their artworks.

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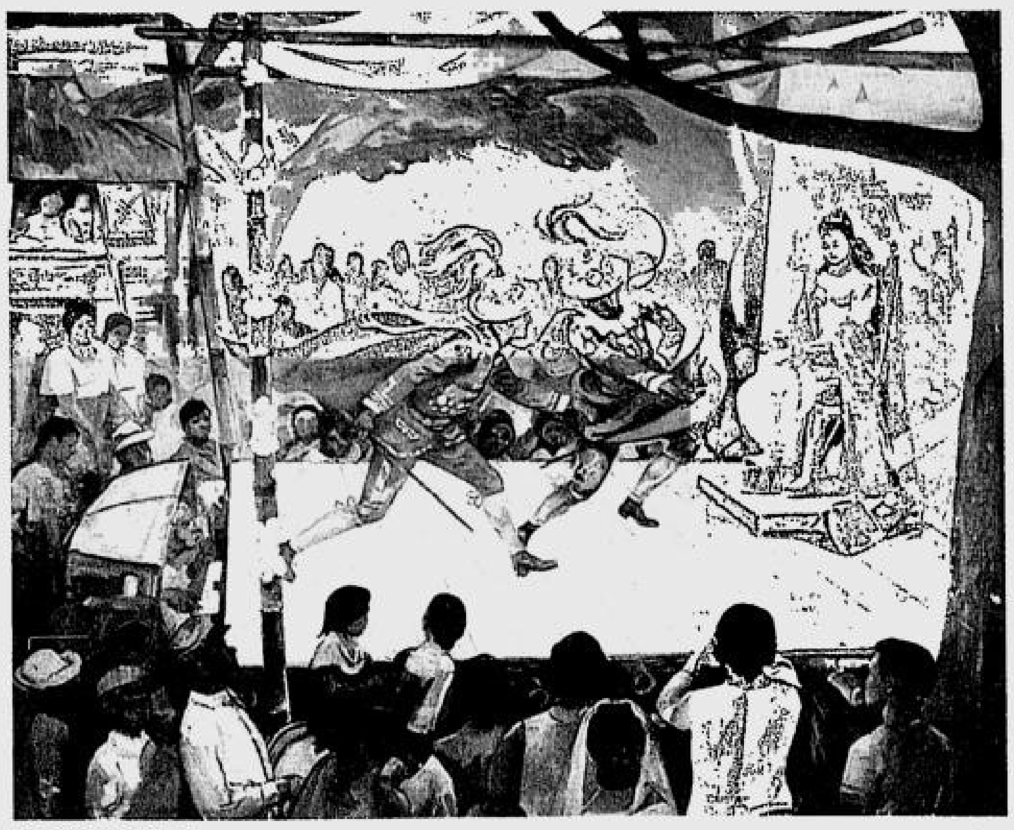
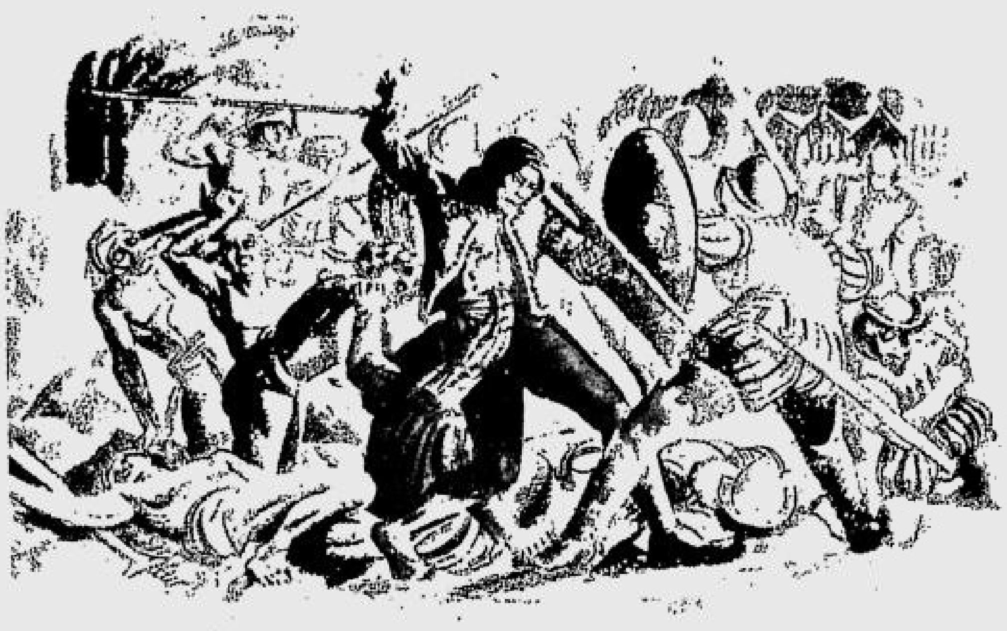


"COMEDIA," oil



CHARCOAL drawing from "Philippine Saga"

Forgotten heritage

From page F1

looks conservative now, almost like textbook illustrations. He worked within the traditional style, in a wide range of mediums that include oil, watercolor, tempera, pastel, pencil, charcoal, pen-and-ink. In all, his draftsmanship is a joy to behold.

He has a lyrico-romantic sense of figuration. His images are composed of flowing lines and soft colors depicting languid, idealized, curvilinear figures on a background that's almost always a wash.

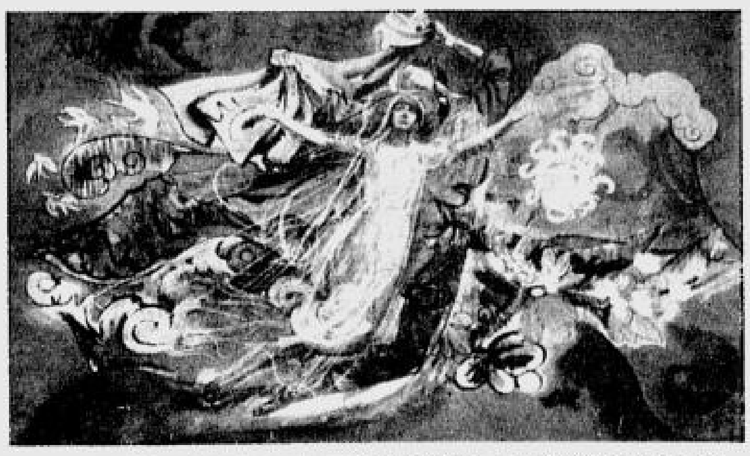
An early major work of his was in the book "Philippine Saga: A Pictorial History of the Archipelago since Time Began," published in the late 1940s, with text by H. Otley Beyer and Jaime C. de Veyra and illustrations "vigorously executed by Manalad, with an assist from Manansala, who took care of most of the renderings," says Guerrero. He adds: "But it was Manalad who conceived all the ideas and did the line drawings."

By the time he was doing mytho-historical murals, Botong Francisco had also became an assistant. Artist Nestor Leynes has this to confirm: "Actually Manansala and Francisco studied composition under him."

The book offers some reasons why, though he had gifts comparable to Botong and Manansala, Manalad "did not achieve the spectacular success nor the recognition enjoyed by these contemporaries."

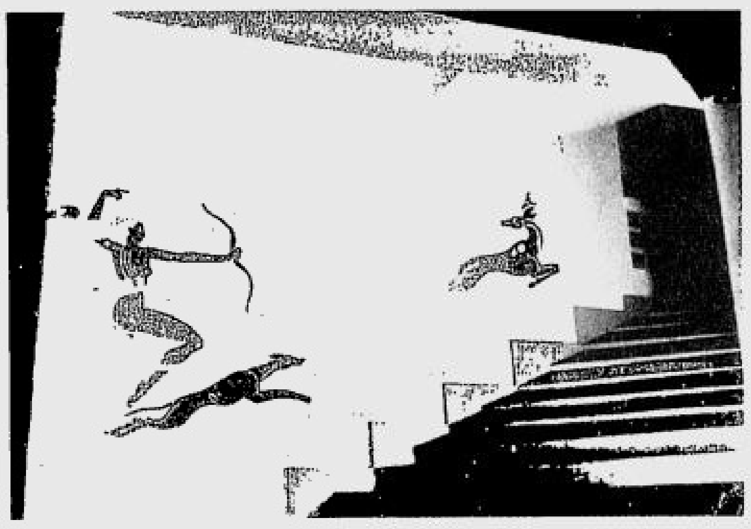
It didn't help that many of his major artworks had been reduced to rubble or remain unaccountably missing, such as the decorative murals in the demolished Lyric Theater; the "Philippine Arts and Culture" mural which had disappeared from the Heroes' Hall of Malacañang Palace after the 1986 Edsa Revolt; the original pen-and-ink drawings of "Tadhana: A History of the Filipino People," whose whereabouts are now unknown.

One can only take comfort in the fact that a slim book is here to stay as testimony and memento of that rich heritage though lost legacy.



"BANAHAW and Makiling," tempera

THE ARTIST and his wife Maria



DECORATIVE mural in the Lyric Theater

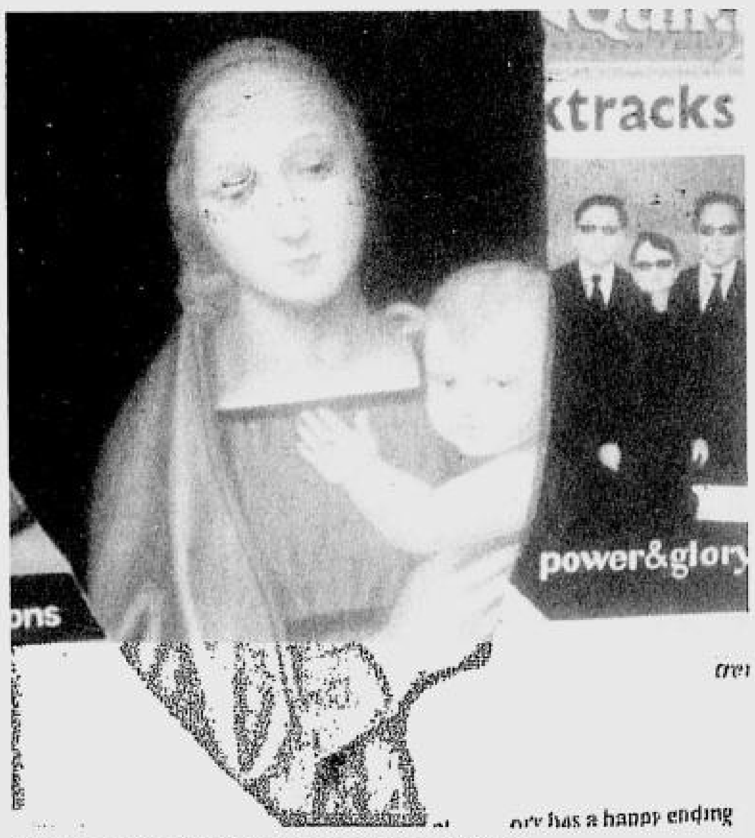
Social realists . . .

From page F2

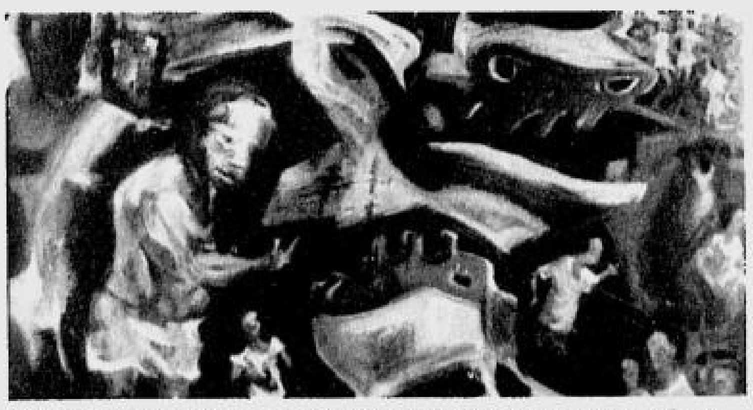
PINTO Art Gallery showcases "The Bamboo Advantage" until Jan. 24, 2004. The show features bamboo structures and spaces by Ning Encarnacion-Tan and paper bamboo. Pinto Art Gallery is at 1 Sierra Madre, Grand Heights, Antipolo City.

GALLERY of Prints presents decorative copper engravings and lithographs from three centuries in the exhibition " Philippine and Asia-Pacific Viewscapes." The show runs until Jan. 7 at the 3/F, Artspace, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

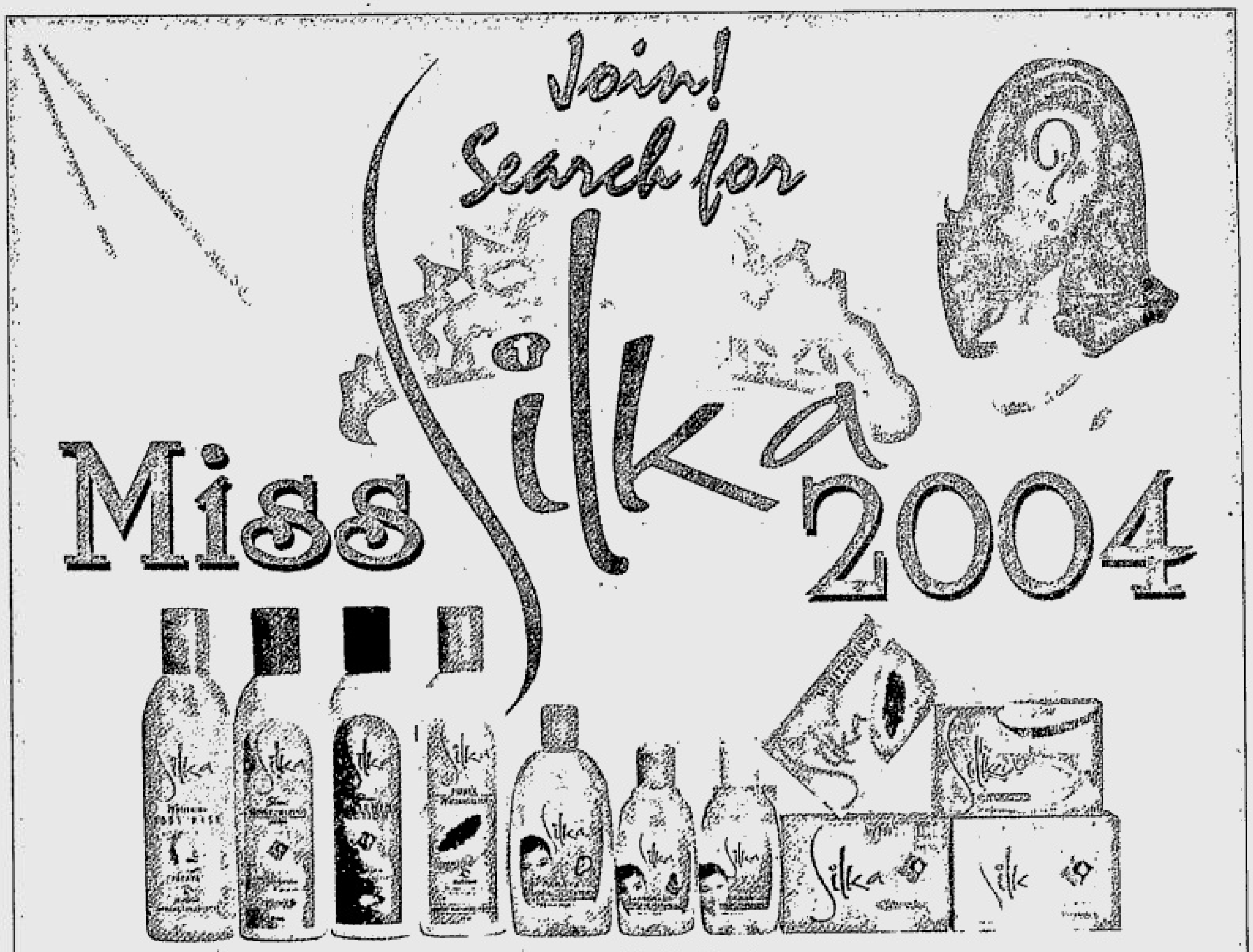
SYANO ArtLink showcases "Haplos," a group exhibit of paintings by Kim Adama, Mardy Aguilar, Aurora Caparas, Eileen Bondoc-Escueta, Albert Grupe, Linda Caedo-Lupton, Tony Martino, Ed Ramos, Micaela Lourdes Reyes, Lily Avila-Wuzela with Nunelucio Alvarado and Egai Fernandez. Their paintings immortalize pure love through the Mother and Child. The show runs until Jan. 7, 2004 at 19 Shanghai St., Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque.



"INA ng Bayan," by Ed Ramos, at Syano ArtLink



"ISANG Palaisipang Pangsiyudad," by Pablo Baens Santos, at Astra



MECHANICS:

1. All natural born females residing in the Philippines between 18 - 24 years old meeting the criteria below are invited to join the search for Miss Silka 2004:
   - ⊙ fair complexion
   - ⊙ at least 5'3" in height
   - ⊙ with pleasing personality of good moral character
   - ⊙ College level or College graduate

*PROMO STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2003 UNTIL MARCH 31, 2004

2. Entries have to be mailed with the following requirements enclosed:
   - ⊙ one (1) label or empty box carton of any Silka product
   - ⊙ Bio-data including name, address, contact number and signature
   - ⊙ Vital statistics including height and weight
   - ⊙ 3R size close-up colored picture
   - ⊙ 4R size full-body colored picture
3. Entries have to be mailed to the following address:

Search for Miss Silka 2004
c/o PBS ADVERTISING
Dolmar Building, 1122 Perez Street,
cor. U.N. Avenue, Paco Manila

4. Selection Process:
   - ⊙ There will be four (4) qualification rounds held before the day of Miss Silka 2004 Pageant.
   - ⊙ For each qualification round, twenty (20) candidates will be interviewed. Three (3) will be chosen as finalists for each round – for a total of twelve (12) finalists to compete for the title of Miss Silka 2004 on the day of the pageant.
   - ⊙ Selected candidates and finalists will be notified through registered mail. For those residing in remote areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, 2-way transportation fare and 1 night hotel accommodation will be provided for the participant and 1 companion.

Schedule of Events:

Event	Event Date	Last Day for Entry Submission
Qualification round # 1	January 10, 2004	December 31, 2003
Qualification round # 2	February 7, 2004	January 31, 2004
Qualification round # 3	March 6, 2004	February 29, 2004
Qualification round # 4	April 3, 2004	March 31, 2004
Miss Silka Pageant 2004	April 24, 2004	

*Only one entry per participant will be acknowledged throughout the duration of the search.
*All Silka employees, distributors, retailers and advertising agencies, including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded.

5. Awards:

Miss Silka 2004 winner
- Php 50,000
- one (1) year exclusive contract with Cosmetique Asia, promoting all Silka products through mall tours, TV guesting and other PR activities
- an exclusive date with TV Star and Silka Endorser John Lloyd Cruz

1st runner up
- Php 35,000
- Silka gift pack

2nd runner up
- Php 25,000
- Silka gift pack

12 finalists chosen during the elimination rounds
- Php 5,000
- Silka gift pack

Candidates interviewed
- Silka gift pack

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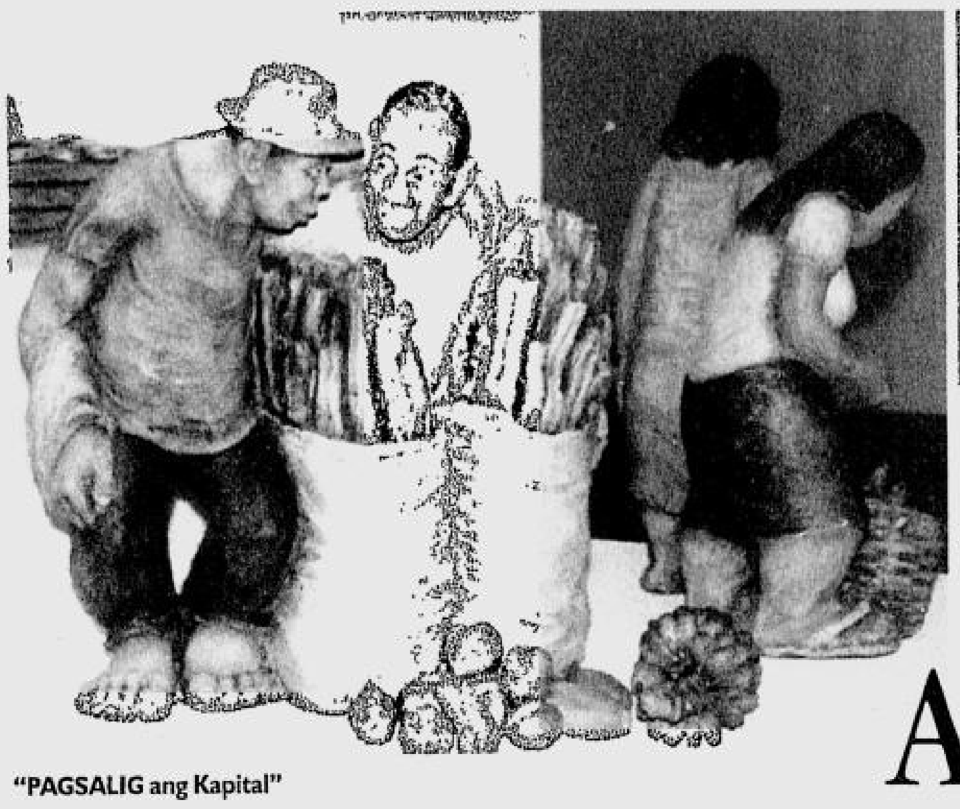
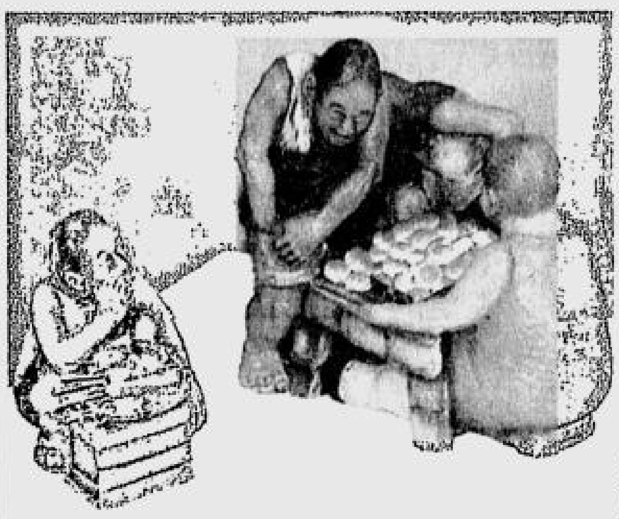
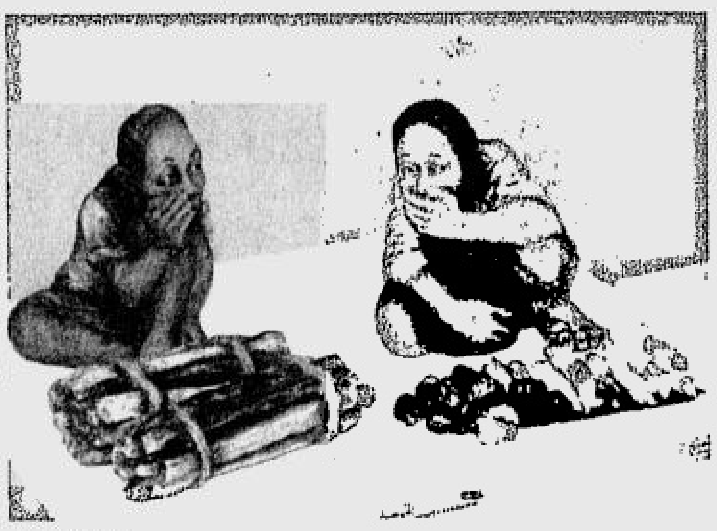


"PAGSALIG ang Kapital"



"WALA Sapak" and "Mestiza Vendor"



"TSISMIS"

Art with snob appeal

By Constantino C. Tejero

FOLK art used to be relegated to kitsch by culture mandarins. Some snobs might call such a piece charming only if it's made of, at least, semiprecious stones. Others would find it of high aesthetic merit only if it's part of an archaeological excavation.

All that attitude and sensibility is going away with the coming of Postmodernism. Mass culture is now standing shoulder to shoulder with the fine arts. A piece of folk art nowadays doesn't have to be 1,000 years old or made of gold, ivory, porcelain or sapphire to be taken seriously.

With all the mirth and liberality Postmodernism is turning anything on its head, it's a free-for-all. When *komiks* becomes high art and a toilet bowl in a gallery is worthy of reverence, what is there left to trample on?

There is no high art and low art anymore, and if there is, low art is high art. This, of course, is reverse snobbery: The lowlier the appearance of an object, the more it has snob appeal.

Hitherto elitist artists have started rethinking their art and flirting with the possibilities of assimilating the art of the people. They explore the primitive, the folk, and appropriate forms and ideas rooted in the masses.

Loving details

The art of Susanito Sarnate fuses folk art and fine art. In it he finds a perfect marriage for the visual forms of mass culture and what Victorian critics called "high seriousness" in art.

Thus, his art has a broad appeal, as could be seen in his recent exhibit "Tianda," presented by Balay Taliambong in The Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

These are some 20 polychrome miniature group sculptures of hand-molded and oil-painted terra cotta, depicting men, women and children selling their goods in the marketplace.

Each piece shows how the artist has lovingly applied the details on the clay, from the realistic color to the rough texture, so small yet so lifelike. This is high-fired ceramic, so each piece doesn't easily break if it drops.

Why, there are teeny-weeny objects here!—replicas of garlic, ginger, pepper, mussels, *daing na sapsap, tabagak, salmonete, puto, piyaya, pinasugbo, pan de sal, camote,* banana-cue, corn on the cobs, papaya, radish, *saba, ampalaya, puso ng saging,* eggplants, firewood. You can just imagine with what difficulty the artist molded and painted each tiny object.

(A sculptor from La Carlota, Negros Occidental, Sarnate took up Fine Arts in La Consolacion College in Bacolod. He also does sculptural works of wood and cement.)

The entrancing pieces are formed individually, thus, can be arranged in groups or isolated from one another. You can even interchange their spreads of ware, so that a peddler of firewood can next day be hawking tomatoes, if it suits your mood.

Beyond charming

Sarnate has observed how this underground economy works in his province: "Once a week, every Saturday, the farmers from the mountains of La Carlota come down to the village to sell. The produce that does not sell will rot, but it would be more expensive if it's transported back to the mountains. What the farmer does is leave his produce behind to someone he can trust, who usually does not have capital. So he can continue with his farming while his products get to be sold by someone he trusts."

Sarnate also talks of other forms of livelihood in the marketplace: *alsada, diskarte, agogo,* "diversified." Such are the scenes he depicts in this exhibit through charming little tableaux.

Beyond the charming-ness, however, can be gleaned, etched in the figures' facial expressions and body contortions, the ordeals and travails of real farmers and vendors, the backbreaking toil of these little people—so realistically has the artist captured it in little lumps of clay. Of course, he didn't forget the fat capitalist, here depicted as a mestiza vendor, fattened by her profit.

Culture snobs may dismiss these as kitschy figurines, but we'd say these are—are they blind? isn't it obvious?—scaled-down manifestations of Social Realism.

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2003 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

'Homecoming' shows the real plague is inhumanity

By Lito B. Zulueta

REVIEW

GIL PORTES has become our most consistent zeitgeist, someone who has the uncanny capacity to seize the spirit of the moment and transpose it onscreen either to give the lie to our most brazen illusions or to wake us up from our cozy lethargy.

It is true that often for Portes, the spirit of the time comes in the form of current events (the headline-grabbing story of the cop who shoots a kid dead in "Saranggola," the defiant transsexual in "Miguel/ Michelle," the homosexual sex captive of the Japanese army during the Second World War in "Markova: Comfort Gay"). But his is not a talent that sensationalizes—he's not a mad tabloid genius. Rather, his is a sensibility that endows humanity to the most scathing issue, the loudest screaming headline.

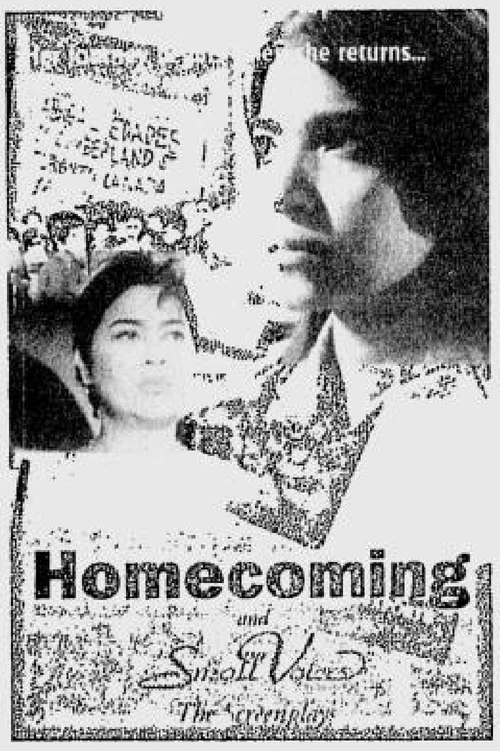
In "Homecoming," Portes tackles the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the epidemic of panic and selfishness it unleashes. The movie tells the story of Abigael Edades (Alessandra de Rossi) who returns to her Quezon hometown from her five-year stint as a nurse in Canada. Her town mates rousingly welcome her as a hero, the crass moniker ascribed by the government to hundreds of thousands of Filipinos working abroad.

She finds her family in tatters, her parents (Elizabeth Oropesa and Bembol Roco) estranged and living apart, and her brother Jepoy (Llester Lansang) living the life of drugs. But she basks in the welcome of her mother and youngest brother Noel (Bryan Homecillo) and the devotion of her boyfriend (James Blanco), who proposes marriage.

Her happiness is short-lived. She is diagnosed with SARS and contaminates Noel. They cause a national scare, are quarantined in Manila, and are shunned by their own townspeople and the municipal hall. Even her boyfriend leaves her.

The hero becomes a heel. "*Isang buwan pa*

HOMECOMING/ G3



BOOK cover of "Homecoming and Small Voices: The Screenplays"

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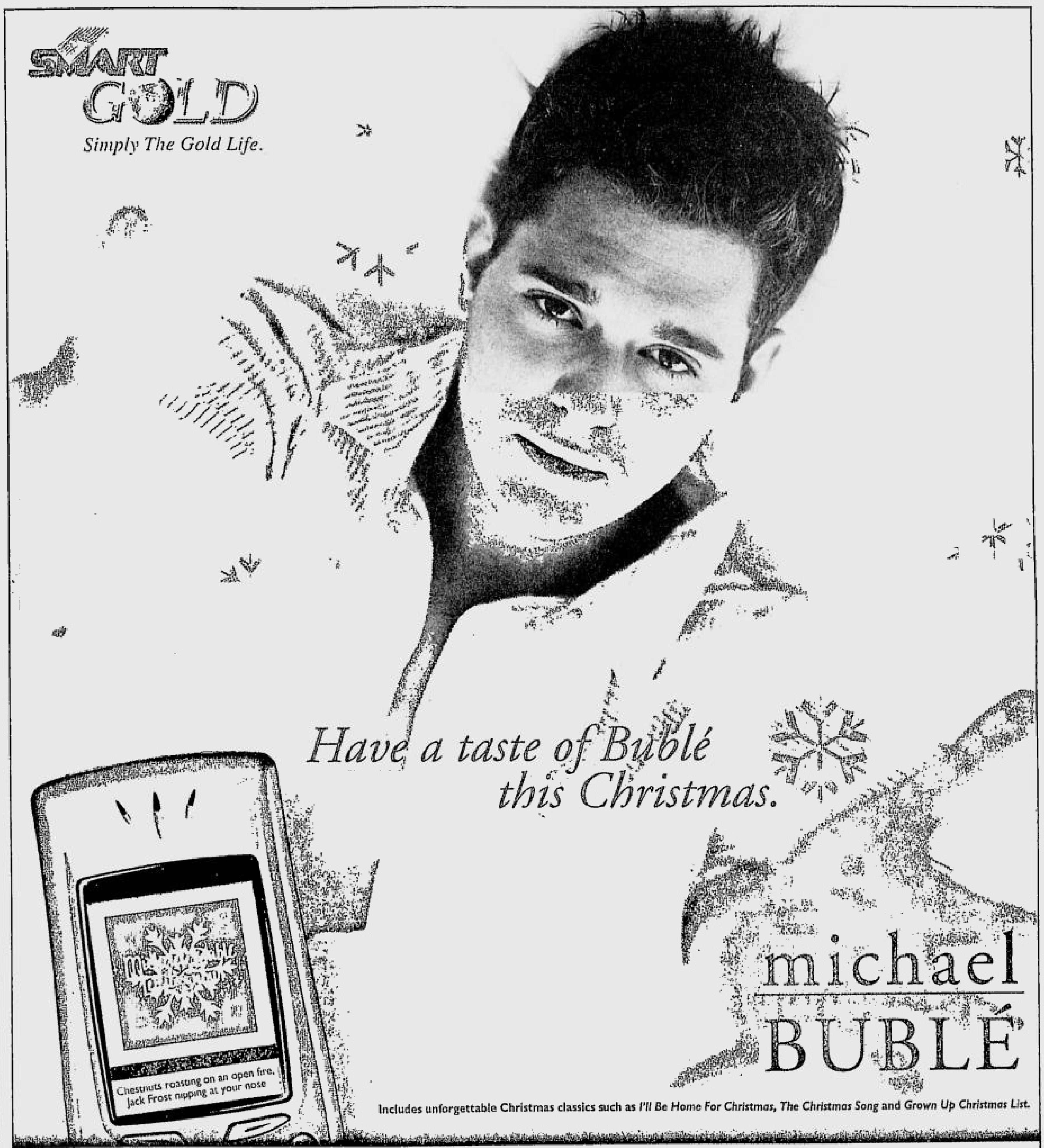
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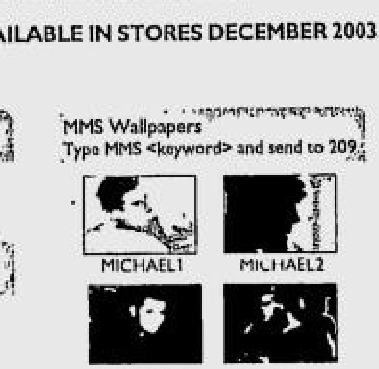
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Yuletide choral sparklers

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE CELEBRATION of the Yuletide season gets an early starter with the outstanding performances of two premiere choirs whose respective programs included a bouquet of Christmas songs. Undoubtedly, the UST Singers and the San Miguel Master Chorale are two of the country's leading choral groups: the former, a university-based ensemble; and the latter, a corporate creation.

The UST Singers, composed of students from the different colleges of the Pontifical University, has been performing locally and internationally and has bagged prestigious international awards from choral tilts abroad, the most prestigious of which is the Choir of the World Grand Prize that it garnered in 1995 in Wales, making it the first and only Asian choir ever to win it to date.

The San Miguel Master Chorale, on the other hand, was founded a couple of years back, and had elicited the admiration of choral buffs with its sterling performances of both serious and pop music. Its members are professional singers who have either taken up vocal study or have had extensive choral singing stints with top local choirs, notably the Philippine Madrigal Singers.

The members of both choirs are drawn from rigorous auditions, and are assessed periodically to ensure quality output.

Listening thus to these two choral groups successively on a lazy Sunday afternoon lasting till night was pure aural delight.

THE SAN Miguel Master Chorale with Darleen Hernandez-Yu, conductor

UST singers with professor Fidel G. Calalang Jr.

Splendid

At the Francisco Santiago Hall of the Equitable PCI Bank in Makati, the UST Singers brought the house down with their splendid singing of international classics songs, excerpts from musicals, Philippine songs and Christmas songs.

The singers poured out a full-throated vocal production, and amazingly showed no sign of tiredness or flatness, firmly clinching each song on pitch, despite an epic rendition of almost two hours.

The choral texture woven by UST Conservatory of Music professor Fidel Calalang, the UST Singers' choral director, displayed much warmth, as it was palpable and at times even heroic. How he etched-unbroken, long, delicate lines and ended fully in pianissimos was simply astounding.

The singers were just divine in "Morten Laurisden's O Magnum Myterium," a classically scored piece whose majesty is expressed in tender soaring lines that resolves in a hush tone. Indeed, the piece expressed the great mystery behind the birth of Christ the Savior in a lowly manger.

In "Cloudburst," a contemporary piece composed by Eric Whitacre, the choir was awesome. Building up passages that burst into startling fortissimos, the choir was fully engaging. The small instrumental ensemble made up of piano, chimes, cymbals, drum and even the clicking of the hands to suggest the sound of rain falling on the ground enhanced the conveyance of a stormy ambiance.

Ruben Federizon's Gabaqan, another contemporary piece composed for the Philippine Madrigal Singers, was freshly intoned. The choir's full vocal production amply gave the earthy color the piece asked for.

The musical numbers "Celebrate" from "Elegies for Punks and Raging Queens" and "One Day More" from "Les Miserables," and the Filipiniana numbers, provided tasteful entertainment. The Christmas numbers simply reminded the audience Christmas was just around the corner, so to speak. One wished there were more Christmas songs, but that would just prolonged a program that was already exhaustive and epic in scale.

In addition to his skill as a conductor, Calalang showed another feat as an arranger, as he practically provided all the handsome arrangements for the Philippine love and patriotic songs in the program.

To Intramuros

As soon as the last song's final note faded, I was on to another great performance, this time in Intramuros, in Clam Shell 1. This time one had a different setting: The audience who came in droves were from all walks of life, and the makeshift tent had installed microphones on the stage. It was an SRO. A festive air filled the entire place, as the Marian procession held on the eve of the Immaculate Conception had just finished. Sponsored by the Department of Tourism and the San Miguel Foundation for the Arts, the concert delighted the audience.

Darleen Hernandez -Yu led the chorale in a non-stop singing of spirituals, Philippine folks songs, OPM and Christmas songs.

The chorale's vocal quality and blending was utterly awesome. It showed much elegance and flexibility. The audience did not only clap but even howled in admiration of excellently rendered numbers, especially in the OPM section, which featured songs they were familiar with such as: "Manila, Manila," "Anak," "Beeeh, Buti Nga" and "Tsismis."

> The UST Singers and the San Miguel Master Chorale enhance the Christmas excitement with their exciting concerts

The Christmas portion included Ramon Tapales' "Diwa ng Pasko," arranged by Lucio San Pedro and rearranged by Noel Velasco. The rewriting of some texts of this song was done in good taste. The late composer was a polyglot but his command of the Tagalog language was not perfect. The piece also suffers from poor prosody, and only an intelligent conductor would be able to make the necessary corrections. The late baritone, Aurelio Estanislao would admonish his students who had poor inflection: "*Bisaya gid!*"

The music, however, is very pastoral and unfolds in the undulating rhythm of the villancico whose rhythmic pattern follows the throbbing of the heart. San Pedro's arrangement was classic in the sense that the song first comes in unison then in duets capped by a rousing full chorus. Noel Velasco retained San Pedro's harmonic progression but added the pulsating rhythm assigned to the male voices to make it more dramatic, before the chorus sang in full.

We salute both choirs for their ravishing performances!

MIGUEL Faustmann as Gallimard

ANA ABAD Santos Bitong as Red Guard

JEREMY Domingo

J.S. JOSE as Song Liling

Rep to open 2004 with 'M. Butterfly'

THE DAVID Hwang play portrays sexual politics

REPERTORY Philippines (REP) will stage the Tony Award-winning play "M. Butterfly" by David Henry Hwang starting Jan. 9 at the REP's Globe Theater at Onstage, Greenbelt 1 along Paseo de Roxas, Makati. It will run for three weekends until Jan. 25.

The play tells the story of Rene Gallimard, a former French diplomat who is confined to prison for carrying out a 20-year-relationship with a Chinese male opera singer and spy. Based on a true story that stunned the world, the play also won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Broadway Play, the John Gassner Award for Best American Play and the Drama Desk Award for Best New Play.

Directed by theater stalwarts Baby Barredo and Zeneida Amador, "M. Butterfly" features REP's most talented performers. Veteran Miguel Faustmann plays Gallimard and J.S. Jose plays the beautiful and bewitching Chinese diva, Song Liling.

Other members of the cast are Jeremy Domingo, Ana Abad Santos-Bitong, Pheona Baranda, Mackee Serra, Niccolo Manahan, PJ Rebullida, Amiel Mendoza, Manuel Aquino, Tachie Billano and Banaue Miclat.

Set design is by Miguel Faustmann while costume design is by Baby Barredo and Edgar San Diego. Lighting is by Zeneida Amador.

A rousing new musical, "Fame: The Musical," is REP's second play for the season and is set to open on Jan. 31 at REP's Globe Theater at Onstage. Based on the very popular movie, this production takes the audience inside the souls of the gifted students of New York City's legendary High School for the Performing Arts and their quest for fame. It is directed by Barredo and Amador.

An adaptation of Bram Stoker's riveting thriller, "Dracula," opens on March 19 and will run for three weekends until April 4. A roll-in-the-aisle comedy, "Caught in the Net," is Rep's season ender and is set to run from April 16 to May 2.

Gold Year passes, which entitle the holders to watch all seven Rep plays for the year with guaranteed seats in the reserved section, are available for only P3,500. A Gold Year pass with the same privilege but only good for the four season plays is also available for P2,000.

Rep's production of "M. Butterfly" is open for school, advertising and fund-raising activities. Silver passes for the non-reserved section are available at P1,650 (year pass) and P1,000 (season pass).

Call 8870710 or visit C2-A, Bldg. C, Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati.

Behind-the-scene look at 'Milan'

STAR Studio's December issue gives readers an exclusive first peek at Claudine Barretto and Piolo's Pascual new movie, "Milan."

Included are behind-the-scenes photos of the two stars as they explore Italy, where the movie was filmed, as well as interviews and trivia.

The December issue also discusses the Robin-Juday-Liezl controversy and the reconciliation of sisters Alessandra and Assunta de Rossi.

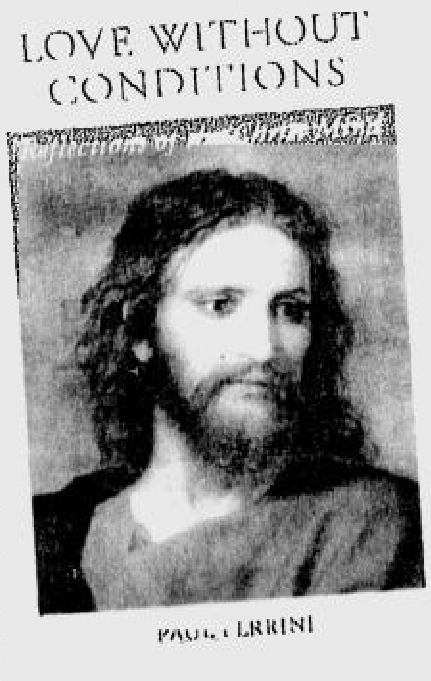
Star Studio also takes readers on a virtual tour of the homes of Angelika de la Cruz and Kaye Abad. Featured in Star Sightings are Judy Ann Santos, "Mr. Suave" Vhong Navarro, Jerry Yan, and the newly married Julius Babao and Christine Bersola.

PIOLO Pascual and Claudine Barretto

Star Studio is available at all bookstores and magazine outlets at P50 a copy. Fans can collect three coupons from the magazine and join the Star Studio Club, which will give them a 10 percent discount on all ABS-CBN Publishing titles, Star Records CD's and cassettes, and restaurants and boutiques owned by celebrities. They can also join the Star Studio Exclusive Party and Sports Festival, where they can meet their favorite celebrities.

Inspirational book out

THE LOCAL reprint of Paul Ferrini's bestseller, "Love without Conditions: Reflections of the Christ Mind," is now available in all PowerBooks and National Book Store branches nationwide.



The book's key concept is unconditional love and forgiveness. It says the concept of conditional love, which has been part of people's upbringing, has to be dropped. Ferrini believes only unconditional love can lead to truly healing and peace. And unconditional love of others starts with unconditional acceptance and love of the self.

Authorized Philippine distributor of Ferrini's books is the Highest Vision Foundation Inc., a non-stock, non-profit organization. Visit www.geocities.com/highestvf and www.paulferrini.com

Call 0917-5998678 or e-mail nikie@pacific.net.ph

'Homecoming' shows the real plague is inhumanity

Gil Portes's new movie is a sensitive portrait of the personal and social wages of SARS

TWO WOMEN. Elizabeth Oropesa, who plays mother to De Rossi's character, steels herself for her family.

From page G1

lang ang nakakaraan nang magbalik ako sa San Isidro," she says at the start of the movie. *"Pero sa loob lang ng maikling panahon na ito, nabago lahat ang aking pananaw tungkol sa buhay at sa mga taong nakapaligid sa akin."* (Just a month after my return, my views on life and the people around me have irrevocably changed.)

Multivaried

Portes's sensitive camera charts the change in all its multivaried, multilevel dimensions. On the one hand, there's the personal struggle of Abigael to make a living for her family amid the loneliness of a foreign land only to find that her efforts come with oppressive wages: domestic dissolution and epidemiological impairment.

On the other hand, there's the social struggle: literally kicked out of the country because of scarce opportunities, Abigael finds economic alleviation abroad but returns to a false homecoming, in which a disease threatens to estrange her again from the society that kicked her out the first time.

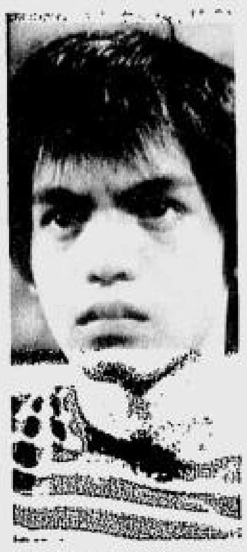
It is Portes's ironic sensibility that cleverly latches on to the SARS epidemic as a lynchpin that explodes and exposes the myth of the Filipino overseas worker as today's modern hero.

Through history, plagues have a way not only of decimating populations, but also of subverting civilization's most cherished myths. In the case of SARS, the Filipino caregivers, who are otherwise valued for their services abroad and the remittances they send home, become pariahs, modern-day lepers spurned by the societies they have helped.

Obviously the tapestry he has chosen to weave is big and encompassing. If it is any indication of his fund-raising powers, he has managed to come up with a budget that is modestly equal to the requirements of the production. After all, he is not only talking about one person bearing a sickness, but a whole society and nation afflicted by a plague.

The private and political scales of the SARS tragedy are evident from the first shot: of Abigael and her mother standing forlorn and dejected in their house as the whole town celebrates fiesta: the wider merriment is muted by the two women's sadness and worry as they contemplate their fate with the coming of SARS.

HEROINE AS HEEL. Alessandra de Rossi plays a Toronto-based Filipino caregiver who contracts SARS.



LLESTER Halig. Moving portrayal

Creative virus

Everything in the production is rendered with a certain minimalist panache. No sequence or scene is wasted. The screenplay by Portes and his young collaborators, Senedy Que and Adolf Alix Jr, does not belabor; it sketches with deftness and understanding. (The screenplay of "Homecoming," along with that of Portes's triumphant 2002 film, "Mga Munting Tinig," is published by the UST Publishing House as "Homecoming" and "Small Voices: The Screenplays." It is available at Solidaridad and other leading bookstores. Call 7313522, 7313101 locals 8252, 8278.)

The virus of creative filmmaking invades every frame. If sometimes the sequence wobbles, there is still the drive of the narrative to propel things forward. The virus is quite consummate.

The ensemble acting is extremely effective: Alessandra de Rossi proves again she's the most exciting actress of her generation. Elizabeth Oropesa is intense and near flawless as the mother. Bembol Roco is engaging as the father. And Llester Halig is moving as the brother coming to terms with his drug dependency.

"Homecoming" proves once again that an independent spirit is needed if artistic cinema is to be true to itself and to the times. Independence is needed if cinema is to matter.

Aside from reaffirming his creative independence and zeitgeist credentials, Portes succeeds in holding up a mirror to the canker of our era: a deadly virus stalks our society and its name is not SARS or AIDS, but intolerance and insensitivity.

Lavish new books celebrate Lennon, Rolling Stones

LENNON legend
An Illustrated Life of John Lennon

NEW YORK—Two lavish new coffee-table books will help baby boomers and the people who love them ponder anew the age-old question: Beatles or Stones?

"Lennon Legend: An Illustrated Life of John Lennon" embellishes an appreciative biography of the late Beatle with 40 removable reproductions of Lennon artifacts—a school report card, playbills, handwritten song lyrics.

"According to the Rolling Stones" interweaves extensive, blunt new interviews with singer Mick Jagger, guitarist Keith Richards, drummer Charlie Watts and "new boy" guitarist Ronnie Wood, and like the Lennon book includes many rare photographs.

Both books, for all their candor, are very much official and authorized products. Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, opened her archives for one, and the normally laconic Watts is listed as consulting editor on the other.

They tell much the same story: More than 40 years ago, in Liverpool and London, a few boys mad for American music banded together, learned to write songs and changed the world—with some drugs, discord and a few deaths along the way.

The difference between their stories now, of course, is that the Beatles fell apart in 1969, and two of the Fab Four have since died while the Stones roll on, still a mighty force in touring and merchandising if not in record sales.

Rebellion

The difference back then was between two brands of rebellion, with the Stones seen as darker, more threatening. It was also the difference between a fresh take on pop and a newly minted genre, rock. And for a certain postwar generation, identifying with one or the other said a lot about oneself.

Both books are published by Chronicle Books, whose "The Beatles Anthology" published in 2000—the model for "According to the Rolling Stones"—sold more than two million copies worldwide, according to Associate Publisher Christine Carswell.

The first printing of the Rolling Stones book is about 250,000 copies, she said, while declining to estimate future sales.

But she said sales were not restricted to baby boomers.

"'The Beatles Anthology' continues to be bought by not just original fans but by the original fans for their kids or the kids for their parents," said Carswell.

Someone must still be interested: A search of online booksellers yielded thousands of entries for both bands.

Original bassist Bill Wyman was too far along with his own book which came out last year to be lured into "According to the Rolling Stones," said co-editor Dora Loewenstein. The daughter of the band's business manager and a long-time Stones insider, she said even she learned some new things about her friends.

"I was delighted they were as frank as they were. I was also incredibly interested myself about some of their takes," she said, citing Jagger's low opinion of "Exile on Main Street," which some critics regard as the Stones' best album.

There is much discussion of the losses of several band members including the late Brian Jones—not all of it kind.

The Stones' most passionate comments are about the music they loved, and the considerably different music they made. They were more or less forced into song-writing but, according to Richards, "We didn't find it difficult to write pop songs, but it was very difficult—and I think Mick will agree—to write one for the Stones."

The Stones, and especially Jagger, have much to say about the techniques of showmanship they turned into the extravagant arena spectacles of today.

That was a direction Lennon refused to take. "I reckon we could send out four waxwork dummies of ourselves and that would satisfy the crowds. Beatles concerts have nothing to do with music anymore. They're just bloody tribal rites," he said.

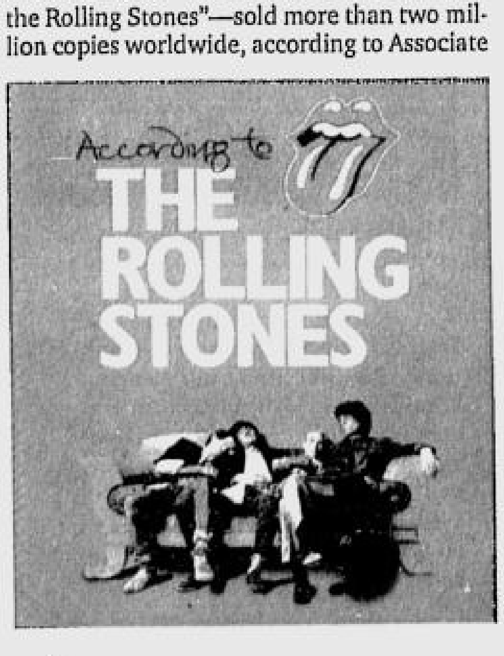
For those still keeping score on the ancient rivalry, only a passing mention of the Stones is made in the Lennon book, but almost all the guest essayists in the Stones book—who include musicians Peter Wolf and Sheryl Crow, record executive Ahmet Ertegun and fashion photographer David Bailey—refer to the Beatles.

And Richards says that far from competing, the two bands conferred in "surreptitious phone calls" to coordinate their record releases. "Everybody was talking about the Beatles versus the Stones and all that crap, and yet between us, it would be, 'You come out first and we'll wait two weeks.'

"We would try never to clash; there was plenty of room for both of us," Richards said.

"People say you're either a Beatles fan or a Stones fan," Chronicle Books' Carswell said. "Obviously I don't agree with that—I don't see any harm in being both."

Reuters



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EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Alumni express gratitude to Pateros school

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor

THE PES ALUMNI: "We reconfirm our gratefulness to our dear alma mater."

MORE than any other time of the year—and despite whatever difficulties we've faced—Christmas has the power to fill us with hope that all will be well, sooner rather than later.

Christmas is also a time for old friends to get together, talk about old times, and wish each other the best of the season.

But at the fourth grand alumni homecoming of Pateros Elementary School (PES), graduates from as far back as 1934 came for more than just the fellowship and merrymaking.

The alumni formally inaugurated a computer laboratory for Grade 6 students as part of their Education Revolution School Adoption program.

Andy Concio, president of the PES Alumni Association, said that while the Department of Education encouraged public schools to implement an auxiliary information technology curriculum for grade school, many public schools lacked the funds to do so.

"And so, to prepare our children for the challenges of the future, the alumni decided to help the school by setting up the computer laboratory," said Andy.

IT as centerpiece

Early this year, he requested the Foundation for Worldwide People Power to help their alumni association come up with a viable school-adoption program with information technology as the centerpiece. He explained that in 2002, former Pesaai president Dr. Ester Santos Bitanga broached the idea of introducing IT concepts to school children as their organization's project.

On Nov. 10, Pesaai signed a memorandum of agreement with school principal Feliza Binuya for the adoption of Pateros Elementary School, although work on the computer laboratory began much earlier.

Andy, with first vice president and retired Philippine National Police Gen. Hector Marcelo, second vice president Rolando G. Luna, and the entire Pesaai board, started making calls and knocking on doors to involve other alumni as well as members of the community.

The response was truly heartwarming. PES alumni here and abroad pitched in to get the school-adoption program going. A spacious room from the new building donated by the late Sen. Rene Cayetano was allocated for the project. Binuya and DepEd supervisor Zenaida Santos assigned a computer teacher.

Wholehearted support

PES Parent Teacher Community Association president Sam Torio, meanwhile, started getting the support of the parents who responded positively "because we love our children and we want them to have a better future."

Before anyone knew it, the first group of Grade 6 students sat down in front of computer terminals, eager to begin their first lesson.

Work was just beginning.

"We still need about 20 more computers to add to the 26 we now have so that each pupil will have one terminal. We hope to be able to accommodate even Grades 4 and 5. If you have any old working Pentium computer units that you no longer need, we'll be more than happy to receive them," Hector said.

If you want to help, call the FWWPP at 6314970, or e-mail fwwpp@globelines.com.ph.

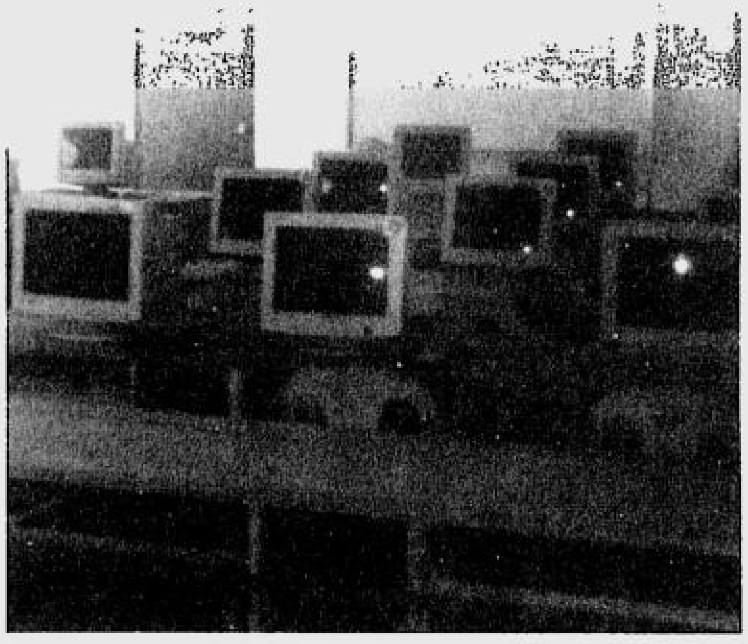
The FWWPP wishes you all a blessed Christmas and says a prayer of thanks for sharing our belief that education is the best weapon against poverty.

The author is the executive director for the Foundation for Worldwide People Power.

ANDY Concio, PESAAI 2003 president

GEN. Hector Marcelo (ret., PNP), this year's homecoming chair

SAM Torio, PES PTCA president



THE PATEROS Elementary School computer laboratory

Business school earns acclaim

THE ATENEO Graduate School of Business (AGSB) has been named by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) a Center of Development in Graduate Management Education.

The CHED citation recognized the Ateneo school for its outstanding postgraduate education in the field of business and management.

AGSB shared its expertise with Columban College in Subic, Olongapo City; Holy Angel University in Angeles City; and the University of Makati.

The school's program aims to increase faculty knowledge and appreciation of core business subjects. It also emphasizes ethical reasoning and leadership qualities crucial in management practice.

A total of 26 faculty from Columban College, 30 from Holy Angel University, and 36 from the University of Makati were trained by Ateneo. The training will indirectly benefit some 15,000 students per semester in the three schools.

Linkages with partner schools are continuing through various programs such as the three-day Ethics workshop for faculty and administrators of Holy Angel University. A Regis MBA Program scholarship was awarded to a faculty member of Columban College.

The activities are in keeping with AGSB's response to the Atenean challenge to be responsive to the needs of the secular society, specifically in the area of business education.

THE NEW Parker Gel Pen displays the same commitment to quality the pen maker has been known for, as in its Vector, Jotter and other innovations. The new pen makes use of a special ink that's fade-proof and smudge-free. When not in use, the ink is in an unmoving, thick state. This prevents leaking or similar headaches; it changes back to a liquefied state when the pen is in use. These pens are available in two point sizes—medium and fine—and can be refilled with six striking colors.

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